

## Gary Gygax Q&amp;A, Part V

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grodog

Wednesday, 10th December, 2003, 06:19 PM

Gary Gygax Q&amp;A, Part V

Continued from <http://enworld.cyberstreet.com/showt...threadid=57832>

Joseph Elric Smith

Wednesday, 10th December, 2003, 06:35 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **grodog**Continued from <http://enworld.cyberstreet.com/showt...threadid=57832>

I see you just wanted the first post :)

Ken

BrooklynKnight

Wednesday, 10th December, 2003, 06:55 PM

Col\_Pladoh, where do you think D&D will be 5-10 years from now?  
20?

jokamachi

Wednesday, 10th December, 2003, 07:09 PM

Hey Gary,

I seem to remember reading that you enjoyed wargaming in the early days before D&D, so I'm curious as to what kind of experience you have with miniatures. How much effort did you and your friends put into miniatures at that time? Did you paint them with great detail or were they simply tokens for you to manipulate? Has that attitude changed? What about now? Do you still enjoy incorporating minis into your campaigns? Is it much harder since monsters have grown so fantastic in scope? How much attention/detail do these minis receive from you?

Lastly, I'm curious if you've seen the new minis line from Wizards. It has displayed a fair degree of success and seems to be pulling in thousands upon thousands of new minis fans by the week. Do you think that's good for the game (D&D)?

Sincerely, Jokamachi

Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 10th December, 2003, 10:05 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **ArthurQ**Col\_Pladoh, where do you think D&D will be 5-10 years from now?  
20?

That calls for some powerful crystal ball reading, amigo!

I have no doubt that D&D will be around in 10 years time. How popular it is then is really something that depends on what WotC and Hasbro do between now and then to make it what it will then be.

Right now nothing is being done to bring in new players, and if that isn't rectified, I believe the audience will contract by some few percent each year.

Competition from electronic games is fierce, now capturing most of the young potential paper RPGers.

Cheers,  
Gary

Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 10th December, 2003, 10:33 PM

Howdy Jokamachi,

Quote:

Originally Posted by **jokamachi**

Hey Gary,

*I seem to remember reading that you enjoyed wargaming in the early days before D&D, so I'm curious as to what kind of experience you have with miniatures. How much effort did you and your friends put into miniatures at that time? Did you paint them with great detail or were they simply tokens for you to manipulate?*

---

I played military miniatures for many years--ancients, medieval, ECW, Napoleonics, ACW, Victorian, and WW II to 1956. I personally had 40 mm pre-painted medieval figurines, a small contingent of Turkish 20 mm troops, Brunswick Napoleonic figurines that I painted, and a large number of US WW II men and AFVs, the latter including many conversions I did.

In addition I planned and refereed many games in various periods. Our WW II games would sometime last the whole weekend--about 20 hours of playing time.

Finally, I had a sand table that we would spend hours preparing for a game, so that the terrain and buildings, if any, looked great.

The spectacle added considerably to the enjoyment of the actual reason for playing--the exercise of strategic and tactical ability.

Quote:

---

*Has that attitude changed? What about now? Do you still enjoy incorporating minis into your campaigns? Is it much harder since monsters have grown so fantastic in scope? How much attention/detail do these minis receive from you?*

*Lastly, I'm curious if you've seen the new minis line from Wizards. It has displayed a fair degree of success and seems to be pulling in thousands upon thousands of new minis fans by the week. Do you think that's good for the game (D&D)?*

*Sincerely, Jokamachi*

---

I don't usually employ miniatures in my RPG play. We ceased that when we moved from CHAINMAIL Fantasy to D&D.

I have nothing against the use of miniatures, but they are generally impractical for long and free-wheeling campaign play where the scene and opponents can vary wildly in the course of but an hour.

The GW folks use them a lot, but they are fighting set-piece battles as is usual with miniatures gaming.

I don't believe that fantasy miniatures are good or bad for FRPGs in general. If the GM sets up gaming sessions based on their use, the resulting play is great from my standpoint. It is mainly a matter of having the painted figures and a big tabletop to play on ;)

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 10th December, 2003, 10:37 PM

Oops!

I forgot to mention that I spent a lot of time painting and converting fantasy figures for the CHAINMAIL Fantasy game.

We also used to play Napoleonic and WW II naval miniatures a fair amount.

Gary

---

MerricB

Wednesday, 10th December, 2003, 11:02 PM

G'day Gary!

WotC are bringing out a new "Basic D&D" set out next year... hopefully that will help bring people into role-playing, whichever system they then choose to move to. :)

Are you enjoying the preparing the Castle Zagyg project?

Cheers!

---

Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 10th December, 2003, 11:13 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **MerricB***

*G'day Gary!*

*WotC are bringing out a new "Basic D&D" set out next year... hopefully that will help bring people into role-playing, whichever system they then choose to move to. :)*

*Are you enjoying the preparing the Castle Zagyg project?*

*Cheers!*

---

Howdy Merric:)

If they make the new Basic D&D a proper introductory product and push it through mass-market outlets, it will indeed be a boon!

As for the *Zagyg's Castle* project, laying the groundwork for the main part of the multi-release series is demanding but quite enjoyable to me. I

have been on hold for about a month, though, awaiting the roster of monsters to be included in the C&C rules. I'm not really complaining, though, as I have plenty of other work to keep me occupied, and have used free time to go back over the material I've written for the campaign-base module to detail and polish it.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

grodog

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 09:40 AM

Victorious German Arms?

Hi Gary---

A friend loaned me a copy of "Victorian German Arms: an alternate military history of world war two" by e. gary gygax & terry stafford (Baltimore, MD: TK Graphics, 1973).

It's 76 pages long, about the size of the OD&D manuals (octavo), has a lightweight, white card stock cover, with a German eagle facing dexter with a wreathed swastika in it's claws, while the back cover only has a swastika and the publisher's contact info.

Do you recall how many copies of this were printed? Did you used it in conjunction with Tractics? Who's Terry Stafford (any relation to Greg Stafford of RuneQuest fame)? Any other interesting tidbits?

As always, thanks :D

---

Col\_Pladoh

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 01:28 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **grodog***

*Hi Gary---*

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*It's 76 pages long, about the size of the OD&D manuals (octavo), has a lightweight, white card stock cover, with a German eagle facing dexter with a wreathed swastika in it's claws, while the back cover only has a swastika and the publisher's contact info.*

*Do you recall how many copies of this were printed? Did you used it in conjunction with Tractics? Who's Terry Stafford (any relation to Greg Stafford of RuneQuest fame)? Any other interesting tidbits?*

*As always, thanks :D*

---

Yuletide Greetings!

Grodog, you surely do manage to find some oldies. Next you'll be digging up my old "Baku" expansion for Avalon Hill's *Stalingrad* board wargame, my first boardgame, the *Battle of Arsouf*, or maybe the "Conanomacy" Dippy variant I did... :eek:

Terry Stafford was the commander of the British Far East Squadron in the Ad Hoc Committee for the Reinstitution of WW II, the game directed by a group of wargamers at Stanford U. back around 1962. I was living in Chicago, met Terry through the International Federation of Wargaming (a society I co-founded with Bill Speer and Scott Duncan, and Terry Joined). Thus I became the commander of the Chinese Communist forces in the short-lived WW II recreation (Don Kaye was commander to the Nationalists, BTW). Anyway, Terry used to drop in during lunch hour when I worked for Fireman's Fund Insurance Company in Chicago, and we'd talk military history. One day we got onto the subject of alternate history and decided to write one where the Germans won WW II. Between us we did about 30 maps and the text you have in *Victorious German Arms*.

Ted Pauls was an active SF fan in Baltimore, published a fanzine, *Kipple*, to which I subscribed--as did folks like L. Sprague de Camp and Jack Chalker, then about as well-known as I was;) When Ted learned about the ms. Terry and I had done he asked to publish it, and we agreed. Sadly, the Good Mr. Pauls totally screwed it up, left out all the maps, lost them to boot! I think he printed 2,000 copies of VGA, maybe it was 3,000, and to the best of my recollection, I think all Terry and I ever received was a very small advance. My copies of that work are long lost.

About a year ago Lauren Wiseman from SJG emailed and inquired if we would be interested in having SJG republish it. I got ahold of Terry, and we both agreed it would be okay. that's the last I heard, so I assume that Steve Jackson changed his mind.

Terry Stafford is not related to Greg. Interestingly, though, Greg Stafford was here in Lake Geneva for a time, a partner with another chap here and running a metal casting business doing 30 mm figurines. He left that enterprise about the time I moved back to Lake Geneva from Chicago, so I never met Greg here. His former partner hit it big with Bergamont Brass back in the 60s when large belt buckles were in vogue, and that company is still operating and doing well, having moved to Darien, Wisconsin where the rent is a lot less than spece in this tourist town.

So there's a long response to a couple of short questions :D

Holiday best,  
Gary

---

Mirth

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 04:36 PM

I don't really have anything to ask, I just wanted to say that I find all of this history fascinating. Thanks, Gary.

Also, I did have the pleasure of meeting you one summer in Atlanta at DragonCon back in 1986 or 87 I think (when it was still a split affair between the Atlanta Fantasy Fair & DragonCon), where you graciously signed my OD&D box set and my 1st ed. DMG. I pulled them off the shelf just now to see if the date was inside, but alas...

It was nice to meet you then and it's great to hear these stories now.

Play on,

Jay

---

**jayaint**

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 04:58 PM

Hi Col...

As someone who owned the red-box set, but never really got anything more out of it than waxing in the numbers on the dice (hey, I was 7) and who has only played casually and never been to Cons, fairs, etc... I just wanted to say that I am always glued to these Q & A threads with you.

Two questions today:

1. Can you let us in on any more "secrets" about the origins of different elements of GH? I really enjoyed learning, and have wow'ed some of my friends by pointing out, that the GH map is Northern Ill, Wisc. and Mich just turned like 270 degrees upside down.

and 2. What do you think about stroytelling based games, like interactive fiction, or Rpg's with less number crunching and dice rolling? With your background, I have no idea whether those kinds of games interest you at all.

Thanks for the great thread and the info.

---

**mistere29**

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 05:19 PM

I was wondering about the cavalier class. He's pretty tough. You wrote a good article on why you did what you did when designing the Barbarian Class. I was wondering what your thoughts were when designing the Cavalier subclass.

---

**Col\_Pladoh**

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 05:34 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Mirth***

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*Also, I did have the pleasure of meeting you one summer in Atlanta at DragonCon back in 1986 or 87 I think (when it was still a split affair between the Atlanta Fantasy Fair & DragonCon), where you graciously signed my OD&D box set and my 1st ed. DMG. I pulled them off the shelf just now to see if the date was inside, but alas...*

*It was nice to meet you then and it's great to hear these stories now.*

*Play on,*

*Jay*

---

Aloah, Mirth!

Glad to be supplying some enjoyment via this thread;)

I did enjoy the DragonCons I was at. Sorry I didn't date my autograph...sometimes i do, sometimes I don't. Too bad about Ed, and thus a fantasy yarn I wrote for a Fritz Leiber's Nehwon compilation about Sheelba and Ningauble will never get published. I've misplaced my ms. for it too, a 40K words yarn :rolleyes:

Yuletide best,  
Gary

---

**Col\_Pladoh**

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 05:55 PM

Holiday Cheer, Jayaint!

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **jayaint***

*Hi Col...*

*As someone who owned the red-box set, but never really got anything more out of it than waxing in the numbers on the dice (hey, I was 7) and who has only played casually and never been to Cons, fairs, etc... I just wanted to say that I am always glued to these Q & A threads with you.*

---

Well darn! Why not break on through to the other side, do some RPGing. then you'd have a great time at cons :cool: Pleased that you enjoy the Q&A threads, of course.

Quote:

---

*Two questions today:*

*1. Can you let us in on any more "secrets" about the origins of different elements of GH? I really enjoyed learning, and have wow'ed some of my friends by pointing out, that the GH map is Northern Ill, Wisc. and Mich just turned like 270 degrees upside down.*

---

Actually, most of the singular sinister attitude of mind expressed in the original WoG work has been revealed--the names of persons, places, and things drawn from actual persons or puns--although the website dealing with that has a number of erroneous ones.

Maybe if you have specific questions I can supply something, though.

[/QUOTE]and 2. What do you think about stroytelling based games, like interactive fiction, or Rpg's with less number crunching and dice rolling? With your background, I have no idea whether those kinds of games interest you at all.

Thanks for the great thread and the info.[/QUOTE]

"Storytelling" games are not RPGs. Neither are "diceless" games.

An RPG creates a story, does not follow a script. That's a play, possibly improv theater. In a real RPG the GM develops a backstory and plot, sets the scenes, and then the PCs interact with those and by their actions create the actual tale, the events and conclusion of which are indeterminate until that occurs.

As in real life, chance and random occurrences must be a part of an RPG adventure. As a matter of fact you and I do not know what will happen in the next minute. As is oft quoted, "There's many a slip between cup and lip." to ignore random events, not allow chance into play, is to consign the game to predestination. For example, the best golfer might be stung by a bee at the moment he is about to make an easy putt, thus miss it. Who knows when a tire will blow out? Can anyone predict with certainty that a sudden gust of wind won't blow an obstructing object onto a windshield? throw off the course of a missile?

Nuff said;)

Anyway, I am a gamer who will happily play just about any sort of game given time and opportunity. I run a regular RPG campaign, play cards, board, and table games now and then, but shun computer games as too bloody addictive to me, for I am one who needs to be writing creatively most of each day.

Welcome!  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 05:58 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **mistere29***

*I was wondering about the cavalier class. He's pretty tough. You wrote a good article on why you did what you did when designing the Barbarian Class. I was wondering what your thoughts were when designing the Cavalier subclass.*

---

Holiday Greetings, Mistere29,

the short answer is that I consider well-trained, aristocratic warriors such as knights and samurai as having been very beady fighting machines. The Cavalier class was aimed at depicting a knightly warrior of most able sort...and they were very tough indeed.

Hope that serves, but if not come on back.

Cheerio,  
Gary

---

grodog

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 06:27 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*Actually, most of the singular sinister attitude of mind expressed in the original WoG work has been revealed--the names of persons, places, and things drawn from actual persons or puns--although the website dealing with that has a number of erroneous ones.*

---

Hey, I've offered to fix the errors Gary if you just tell me what they are ;)

---

mistere29

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 07:31 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*Holiday Greetings, Mistere29,*

*the short answer is that I consider well-trained, aristocratic warriors such as knights and samurai as having been very beady fighting machines. The Cavalier class was aimed at depicting a knightly warrior of most able sort...and they were very tough indeed.*

*Hope that serves, but if not come on back.*

*Cheerio,  
Gary*

---

So they where supposed to be tougher, as long as they where role-played according to archetype? Did anyone in your campaign play one?

I was also thinking about weapon specialization. Did you use it in your campaign. I ask because the way it was presented seemed kind of half

hearted. It was first presented in mixed topic "from the sorcerer's scroll" in dragon. I always thought you might not have had as much time to work on it before UA hit the printers.

While i'm at it, have you ever played a game of d20. Not dm, mind you, but play in someone elses campaign.

I appoligize if i repeated questions, but i'm new to these boards

Oh, and i'm christian, you can say merry christmas. :)

---

Col\_Pladoh

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 07:39 PM

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Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **grodog***

*Hey, I've offered to fix the errors Gary if you just tell me what they are ;)*

---

I emailed the fellow who has the website, suggested a couple of additions and corrections, and the response i received was a ho-hum one, so I dropped the matter. After all, I know, and the rest is a matter of no import to me :D

Yuletide best,  
Gary

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## Gary Gygax Q&A, Part V

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Dr Awkward

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 07:47 PM

Gary,

This is Bill Walton from The Escapist ([www.theescapist.com](http://www.theescapist.com)) - I've spoken to you a couple of times before.

I've heard tell that you were called as an expert witness in a trial a couple of years ago, and that the trial had some kind of connection with gaming. Is there any truth to this, and if so, can you tell us anything about it?

Thanks, and happy holidays!

- Bill

Col\_Pladoh

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 07:49 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **mistere29***

*So they where supposed to be tougher, as long as they where role-played according to archetype? Did anyone in your campaign play one?*

Yes, we had a cavalier character in the Greyhawk Campaign, just about every one of the classes in the rules, and the same for demi-human characters. I once played a half-ord cleric-assassin, as a matter of fact.

Quote:

*I was also thinking about weapon specialization. Did you use it in your campaign. I ask because the way it was presented seemed kind of half hearted. It was first presented in mixed topic "from the sorceror's scroll" in dragon. I always thought you might not have had as much time to work on it before UA hit the printers.*

Indeed, we played weapon specialization even before i wrote it up in *Dragon Magazine*. By the time that article hit a couple of PCs in the campaign were doubly-specialized...

Quote:

*While i'm at it, have you ever played a game of d20. Not dm, mind you, but play in someone elses campaign.*

*I appoligize if i repeated questions, but i'm new to these boards*

*Oh, and i'm christian, you can say merry christmas. :)*

I was a play-tester in of the working draft of the *Lost City of Gaxmoor* module written by my sons Ernie and Luke. I played in about a dozen or so sessions that lasted an average of six hours each. I determined then and there that I'd never DM the new D&D system.

As for "can," I think Political corectness is absolute crap, and I freely speak my mind. If someone is offended, ah well... Life is rough, and they'll get over it.

Happy Christmas,  
Gary

grodog

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 07:53 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*Grodog, you surely do manage to find some oldies. [snip]*

*So there's a long response to a couple of short questions :D*

Thanks for the reply Gary. I hadn't seen this book before, and my friend will be quite happy for the info on its provenance, I'm sure :D

FWIW, it appears as if T-K Graphics is still in business today, doing PR/promotional stickers, among other things. Do you think it would be worth trying to contact them to try to find those maps? Coincidentally, I'll be in NJ for the holidays, which is a short hop and skip down to Baltimore...

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*I emailed the fellow who has the website, suggested a couple of additions and corrections, and the response i received was a ho-hum one, so I dropped the matter. After all, I know, and the rest is a matter of no import to me :D*

---

Well, if you're referring to the site at [http://www.greyhawkonline.com/grodog/gh\\_anagrams.html](http://www.greyhawkonline.com/grodog/gh_anagrams.html) then that page is mine, and I'd be happy to fix any errors you've discovered; if you found another site, I'd be happy to look it over for more ideas for additions, too ;)

---

Col\_Pladoh

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 07:54 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Dr Awkward***

Gary,

*This is Bill Walton from The Escapist ([www.theescapist.com](http://www.theescapist.com)) - I've spoken to you a couple of times before.*

*I've heard tell that you were called as an expert witness in a trial a couple of years ago, and that the trial had some kind of connection with gaming. Is there any truth to this, and if so, can you tell us anything about it?*

*Thanks, and happy holidays!*  
*- Bill*

---

Yuletide Greetings, Bill!

What you mention is partially correct. I was indeed an expert witness in regards a trial, but it was about the destruction by prison officials of an inmate's property, 2E adventure modules he had written. He was suing the prison for damages.

He won, but... Sadly, the award granted to him was the least the jury could give. They had no respect for his creative efforts because he was a felon.

That's all I can say.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 08:08 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **grodog***

*Thanks for the reply Gary. I hadn't seen this book before, and my friend will be quite happy for the info on its provenance, I'm sure :D*

*FWIW, it appears as if T-K Graphics is still in business today, doing PR/promotional stickers, among other things. Do you think it would be worth trying to contact them to try to find those maps? Coincidentally, I'll be in NJ for the holidays, which is a short hop and skip down to Baltimore...*

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---

Ho Allen!

Ted Pauls died some years back, so whomever is running TK Grpahics, it isn't him;) Many years ago Ted told me he had lost the maps. thanks anyway.

That is the website I was referring to, yes, and yes, I guess it was you that gave me the luke-warm response :eek:

I'll be glad to check the material over again sometime later...when I have some spare time. For example: Ayelerach is Mark Ratner's Paladin PC. Bilarro is a name I conjured up out of thin air. Blemu Hills are only coincidently close to Blume, and no connection was meant. Bucknard was another name I made up on the spot.

Christmas cheer,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 08:11 PM

Further to Allen

Oops!

I forgot to post one that is rather glaring.

According to Dave Arneson the "Egg of Coot" was created from the name "Gregg Scott," the chap who ran the MicroArmor casting company some years back. Gregg dismissed fantasy games as childish and claimed wargaming was "manly."

Coot indeed!

Heh,  
Gary



Quote:

---

Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

*Yes, we had a cavalier character in the Greyhawk Campaign, just about every one of the classes in the rules, and the same for demi-human characters. I once played a half-ord cleric-assassin, as a matter of fact.*

---

How did you generate attributes in your games?

Quote:

---

*Indeed, we played weapon specialization even before i wrote it up in Dragon Magazine. By the time that article hit a couple of PCs in the campaign were doubly-specialized...*

---

Were you trying to up the power of the warrior classes in D&D. Between WS and Full/Feild plate armor, fighters and cavaliers got a pretty big boost. If so, why?

Quote:

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*I was a play-tester in of the working draft of the Lost City of Gaxmoor module written by my sons Ernie and Luke. I played in about a dozen or so sessions that lasted an average of six hours each. I determined then and there that I'd never DM the new D&D system.*

---

Anything specific that caused this decision. I know you don't want to compare systems, but i don't think telling about your personell experince in a D20 campaign is neccsarilly a comparsion.

---

**Col\_Pladoh**

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 10:07 PM

Holiday Cheer:)

Quote:

---

Originally Posted by **mistere29**  
*How did you generate attributes in your games?*

---

in 1972 we all rolled 3d6, but later when AD&D made the stats more meaningful, players would keep rolling until they got more viable numbers, so then we switched to various systems--roll seven or eight times with 3d6 and keep the six best totals or roll d4d and throw out the lowest die.

After all, the object of the game is to have fun, and weak PCs aren't much fun for most players. Even fine role-players want characters with at least one or two redeming stats...

Quote:

---

*Were you trying to up the power of the warrior classes in D&D. Between WS and Full/Feild plate armor, fighters and cavaliers got a pretty big boost. If so, why?*

---

Absolutely so. Magic-users were very potent, so it was time to beef up the fighter class.

Quote:

---

*Anything specific that caused this decision. I know you don't want to compare systems, but i don't think telling about your personell experince in a D20 campaign is neccsarilly a comparsion.*

---

Well, after being at RPG activity since 1972, I finally realized something that should have been evident to me a couple of decades ago. When I GM I prefer to "wing it" much of the time, and ignore rules that get in the way of the flow of the adventure. The same is true when I play a character, preferring to use logic and imagination in preference to hunting up rules. In short, I do not like rules-heavy systems. Rule-playing is worse than roll-playing. I can enjoy a good deal of hack & slash, but even a bit of rules lawyering makes me want to go and find something else to do.

Additionally, I find no soul in the new D&D game, no archetypes, just seek and destroy play and too much of the comic book superhero in characters.

It is no reflection on those who enjoy the game, just my personal taste that leads me elsewhere.

Yuletide best,  
Gary

---

**Flexor the Mighty!**

Tuesday, 16th December, 2003, 10:49 PM

Hi Gary!

I was wondering if you are a gun owner/collector, do any hunting or recreational shooting, etc? If so what is your favorite to shoot?

Quote:

---

Originally Posted by **Flexor the Mighty!**

Hi Gary!

*I was wondering if you are a gun owner/collector, do any hunting or recreational shooting, etc? If so what is your favorite to shoot?*

---

Heh, Flex'...

Guess my comment on Political Corectness pegged me, eh?

Yes I own a number of handguns and shoulder weapons. I got my first BB pistol when I was about 10, a Daisy BB gun when I was 11, and my first .22 rifle, a single-shot, bolt action Winchester for my 12th birthday--thanks to my grandfather, for mother was not keen on that. I loved plinking and hunting, and how badly I wanted a .25 lever action carbine I used to gaze at in the local Gamble's store is difficult to express in words. Never did get it. I did get a fine lemonwood bow made by Bear Archery, though. It had only a 38-pound pull, so my range was only about 120 yards with a hunting arrow.

However, over the next few years I did add several more .22 rifles, a bolt-action, three shot Mossberg 16 gauge shotgun, a old single-barreled 12 gauge, and a .32 pistol. The rifles were used for squirrel, rabbit, and varmint hunting, the shotguns for pheasants, ducks, and geese, and the revolver for target shooting.

In later years I got rid of the old weapons, added a 7.62 Argentine Mauser, a 30-30 carbine, and various other rifles, shotguns, and quite a few handguns. Years later, when I used to get death threats because of D&D I always had a .357, 9 mm, or .45 caliber pistol handy. If those were too conspicuous, a little .32, .25, or .22 derringer from Defender Arms was around. Sure glad I didn't need to use them...

Damned if I ever did manage to line up a buck whitetail in my sights, but I tried a couple of times.

These days my leg injury keeps me pretty much out of what I used to love to do--hike for miles with or without a firearm. One of the chaps in my gaming group just returned from deer hunting, bagged a 10-point buck:)

Cheers,  
Gary

---

mistere29

Wednesday, 17th December, 2003, 02:05 AM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

Holiday Cheer:)

*in 1972 we all rolled 3d6, but later when AD&D made the stats more meaningful, players would keep rolling until they got more viable numbers, so then we switched to various systems--roll seven or eight times with 3d6 and keep the six best totals or roll d4d and throw out the lowest die.*

*After all, the object of the game is to have fun, and weak PCs aren't much fun for most players. Even fine role-players want characters with at least one or two redeming stats...*

---

What about attribute requirements for classes. Did you hold your players to them?

Quote:

---

*Absolutely so. Magic-users were very potent, so it was time to beef up the fighter class.*

---

Why just the fighter, or where the other classes getting beefed up too?

---

MerricB

Wednesday, 17th December, 2003, 03:04 AM

G'day Gary!

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

*When I GM I prefer to "wing it" much of the time, and ignore rules that get in the way of the flow of the adventure. The same is true when I play a character, preferring to use logic and imagination in preference to hunting up rules. In short, I do not like rules-heavy systems.*

---

Quote:

---

Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

*"Storytelling" games are not RPGs. Neither are "diceless" games.*

*An RPG creates a story, does not follow a script. That's a play, possibly improv theater. In a real RPG the GM develops a backstory and plot, sets the scenes, and then the PCs interact with those and by their actions create the actual tale, the events and conclusion of which are indeterminate until that occurs.*

*As in real life, chance and random occurrences must be a part of an RPG adventure. As a matter of fact you and I do not know what will happen*

*in the next minute. As is oft quoted, "There's many a slip between cup and lip." to ignore random events, not allow chance into play, is to consign the game to predestination. For example, the best golfer might be stung by a bee at the moment he is about to make an easy putt, thus miss it. Who knows when a tire will blow out? Can anyone predict with certainty that a sudden gust of wind won't blow an obstructing object onto a windshield? throw off the course of a missile?*

---

That's an interesting balance between the two - no rules and it's not a RPG, too many rules and it turns into something which more resembles a board-game or similar where imagination is hobbled by the minutiae.

And of course, the point of balance is different for each person and group! :)

###

Gary - just wondering: have you had any chance to play in (rather than DM) a game in the past year? ;)

Cheers!

---

diaglo

Wednesday, 17th December, 2003, 01:05 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **MerricB***

*Gary - just wondering: have you had any chance to play in (rather than DM) a game in the past year? ;)*

---

i know i offered to run an OD&D at DragonCon which gary wasn't going to make. he then mentioned going to Biloxi with Chris Clark to me. and then bagged out on it. :eek:

so i'm curious too.

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Col.Playdoh***

*After all, the object of the game is to have fun, and weak PCs aren't much fun for most players. Even fine role-players want characters with at least one or two redeeming stats...*

---

are you saying people can't have fun playing the game as written?

i beg to differ. we did for 10+ years.

---

Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 17th December, 2003, 02:01 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **mistere29***

*What about attribute requirements for classes. Did you hold your players to them?*

---

But of course! Usually that meant the player with a specific class in mind about to create a character would roll up quite a few before one fit the bill, but that was considered part of the fun

Quote:

---

*Why just the fighter, or where the other classes getting beefed up too?*

---

IMO the other classes needed no strengthening. The fighter was played a lot, and the class had turned out to be the weakest of the lot, lacking anything potent to make it unique. So weapons specialization came into the rules.

Yuletide best,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 17th December, 2003, 02:15 PM

Harry Holidays Merric:)

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **MerricB***

*G'day Gary!*

*That's an interesting balance between the two - no rules and it's not a RPG, too many rules and it turns into something which more resembles a board-game or similar where imagination is hobbled by the minutiae.*

*And of course, the point of balance is different for each person and group! :)*

---

Quite so. Of course the group might well enjoy a game that is an exercise in amateur theatrics, or a combat simulatuon. that isn't in and of itself

anything to fault, but what they are engaging in isn't an RPG, for the game form has more elements.

Quote:

---

*Gary - just wondering: have you had any chance to play in (rather than DM) a game in the past year? ;)*

*Cheers!*

---

Bah! One time only, and that for only a couple of hours. I have fudged a bit and played an Avatar in my own LA game campaign. It is an exercise in self-restraint and really allows little but combat participation, so it isn't very satisfying.

During that same time period several persons who were going to come and run a game here have crapped out.

Of course when I am a guest at a convention there's really no time for me to play. I am there to be seen, socialize, interact, speak and run games for others.

A couple of years back son Alex and I attended a con in Milwaukee as gamers only, played in an RPGA-run game of CoC. Alex's PC panicked and ran off at the end, taking the skraelings off after him, so the rest of us survived. I am pleased to say that the team voted me the best role-player, and I aced a lot of the enemy characters too, including their shaman, but my character ended up with a permanently gimpy leg :confused:

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 17th December, 2003, 02:35 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **diaglo***

*i know i offered to run an OD&D at DragonCon which gary wasn't going to make. he then mentioned going to Biloxi with Chris Clark to me. and then bagged out on it. :eek:*

*so i'm curious too.*

---

As CoastCon came at the same time as the GAMA trade show, Chris Clark had to cancel his appearance. As Chris was my ride there, that sort of made my appearance impossible, eh?

[/QUOTE]are you saying people can't have fun playing the game as written?

i beg to differ. we did for 10+ years.[/QUOTE]

Before you bang you bang your drum too loudly, there are some gamers who have played D&D since 1972, me amongst them :D That said, yes, I am saying that the majority of gamers were looking for more in their PCs than was developed by the regular 3d6 stat rolls taken in order. This is especially true when AD&D was published and all of the stats were given more weight.

But...as a matter of fact I have DMed OD&D, the three-booklet really original version, at a dozen cons over the past few years. I have players roll 3d6, record the scores in order. and play the characters as developed thus. I do modify the rules in regards HPs, have any 1 rolled count as a 2. We have a great time. Of course that's mainly due to nostalgia on the players' part, and I do my best to make the dungeon crawl exciting and unusual--encounters such as those with my Old Guard kobolds.

That your group played OD&D and enjoyed it for 10 years is great, and I am honored to have written a game that brought all of you so much entertainment, Diaglo. Clearly you and your associates are excellent role-players, and the campaign was undoubtedly very well developed and well-DMed. I know that there are many RPGers still playing OD&D, and also OAD&D, That aside, a great number of gamers wanted more, and the success of 3E indicates that change is welcomed still. if it is for the better.

Beside all that, I am an inveterate game designer, and that means I am compelled to ever-tinker with rules :rolleyes:

Holiday best,  
Gary

---

diaglo

Wednesday, 17th December, 2003, 02:56 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*Beside all that, I am an inveterate game designer, and that means I am compelled to ever-tinker with rules :rolleyes:*

---

i refereed OD&D, not DMed. ;) i'm still miffed at you for coming out with Advanced. my players revolted and i had to include some of the rules from those books to placate them. i never did adopt the other means of rolling tho from the UA.

i don't punish you for tinkering. but have pity on us little guys. ;)

---

Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 17th December, 2003, 04:01 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **diaglo***

*i refereed OD&D, not DMed. ;) i'm still miffed at you for coming out with Advanced. my players revolted and i had to include some of the rules from those books to placate them. i never did adopt the other means of rolling tho from the UA.*

*i don't punish you for tinkering. but have pity on us little guys. ;)*

Holiday Cheer, Diaglo:)

I stand corected. Indeed, you refereed OD&D.

Believe me, I know very well that without all the "little guys" I'd be nowhere, so I have no airs or inflated opinion about myself. While it is the nature of my thinking to look for different ways to accomplish a desired end, there was a lot of instigation from my many players to do that with OD&D. J. Eric Holmes pushed hard for a revision, the Basic Set rules, so I agreed. When I got his ms. it seemed a good plan to add in a few of the new rules I was in process of writing for AD&D:)

The variations on rolling dice for characters came from me, mainly because i was weary of watching players roll dozens of times in order to come up with a set of stats they wanted.

It seemed a logical thing to do, as with allowing the scores to be ordered as the player desired so as to arrive at stats for a PC they wanted to play :cool:

Cheers,  
Gary

---

mistere29

Saturday, 3rd January, 2004, 06:53 AM

How much of the changes between the original dragon articals and the final print version of UA was your doing. A couple changes in noticed.

Weapon of choice changed

Specialization was given to the ranger as well as the fighter.

Barbarians could eventually use magic.

Magice full and field plate where added to the treasure tables. (the cavalier articile implied that the player would have too pay to construct them, although i could be reading to much into it)

Magical Elven Chain (i.e. elven chain +1) added to the treasure tables, when the DMG specifcally said there was no magic elven chain. (was this done to strengthen thieves?)

Attrubute Method V (originally made for the barbarian, now available to all humans)

On a related note, how much of oriental adventures was your work. The proficiency system makes me think that OA was geared with 2nd edition in mind.

---

Vigilance

Saturday, 3rd January, 2004, 09:02 AM

Gary, I just wanted to say that I ran the original Temple of Elemental Evil less than three months ago, and still find it, along with Isle of the Ape, in my top two D&D modules.

And the village of Hommlet is actually my favorite part of the module. It reminds me of the European towns my father visited during and after WWII. All that old world charm, but with steel and hidden weapons underneath.

I really think no one has ever mastered the art of writing a D&D module like you, and I wanted to thank you for countless hours of enjoyment from them alone.

Chuck

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 3rd January, 2004, 02:48 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **mistere29****How much of the changes between the original dragon articals and the final print version of UA was your doing. A couple changes in noticed.*

Happy New Year!

What you are asking is that I recall relative minutia from about 20 years ago. Add to that the fact that I was back from running D&D Entertainment because TSR was in grave financial trouble. At the same time that I instructed that my *Dragon* magazine articles be compiled into a work I named *Unearthed Arcana*, I was dealing with a bank that was ready to shut the company down. Meantime I was fending off idiotic ideas. For example:

The head of sales and marketing was ready to kill the RPGA to save a few thousand dollars. I saw to it that he was dismissed. The three outside members of the board of directors were considering selling *Dragon* magazine, at that time the only part of the company that was showing a profit. Meanwhile, I was working with an outside investment group willing to acquire TSR--the only answer that the foolish outside directors thought possible in regards saving TSR from bankruptcy. Their audit was uncovering gross mismanagement, and I had to work through that, cleaning up the mess with a pro tem CEO the board put in place, a fellow who knew nothing about hobby gaming, let alone TSR.

So the points you raise: I recall editing the compiled ms. for the UA book, but what changes I put in and which were done by others i can not say.

Because of severe time constraints I put Francois Marcela Froideval and Zeb Cook onto the *Oriental Adventures* book project. Although I had planned to co-write that work with Francois, TSR needed it immediately after UA was published so as to continue the positive cash flow from product sales. Zeb took it upon himself to delete much of Francois' material in favor of his own--which I found inferior. By the time the ms. hit my desk it was too late for me to rectify that. In all, the OA work was done according to my outline and overall direction, but the end product was not what I had envisaged or anywhere close to what I would have designed. Were TSR not at a desperate pass, I'd have placed Francois in charge of the project and had it re-written.

So Cook's work in OA was evident, yes, and as he was mainly responsible for 2E, a product that lost about 50% of the AD&D audience, your observation is accurate.

As an aside, the publication of the two new books was sufficient to bring TSR out of the red, what with the internal measures taken to reduce waste and expense. With that evident, I sent the investment group packing, and told the three outside directors they were history as soon as I could manage that. That was a mistake. I should have dissembled, and not allowed my ire to be evident.

It is generally impossible to manage a large company and devote any considerable amount of time to creative work.

Cheers,  
Gary

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 3rd January, 2004, 02:57 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Vigilance****Gary, I just wanted to say that I ran the original Temple of Elemental Evil less than three months ago, and still find it, along with Isle of the Ape, in my top two D&D modules.**And the village of Hommlet is actually my favorite part of the module. It reminds me of the European towns my father visited during and after WWII. All that old world charm, but with steel and hidden weapons underneath.**I really think no one has ever mastered the art of writing a D&D module like you, and I wanted to thank you for countless hours of enjoyment from them alone.**Chuck*

Thanks Chuck:)

About all I can say is that I do love gaming, and likely that shows in my writing of adventure material.

When I write a module I immerse myself into the setting, imagine the players' characters interacting with the environment and the encounters, try to anticipate what they will do--the clever and the foolish. To be frank, I find writing modules a lot of work, but it is really fun, much like actually playing the adventure with a character.

Anyway, I am glad you have had so much enjoyment from my designs, and I hope that you'll find some of my more recent efforts good fun too :)

Happy New Year,

Gary

---

med stud

Saturday, 3rd January, 2004, 03:32 PM

Hi Gary (and merry christmas and happy new year!!)

I was wondering something about the names of Erythnul and Nerull; Erythno means red or something like that in latin or greek, and nero means black. Did you name Erythnull and Nerull with that in mind?

---

Gez

Saturday, 3rd January, 2004, 03:53 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **grodog***

*Well, if you're referring to the site at [http://www.greyhawkonline.com/grodog/gh\\_anagrams.html](http://www.greyhawkonline.com/grodog/gh_anagrams.html) then that page is mine, and I'd be happy to fix any errors you've discovered; if you found another site, I'd be happy to look it over for more ideas for additions, too ;)*

---

I've seen several typos...

*"Bilarro = anagram for Robliar" Robilar*

*"Tom Bombadil, J. R. R. Tolkien's character" Tom Bombadil*

*"Radigast = Radigast the Brown" Radagast the Brown*

*"Jack Vance was" Jack Vance still is. Not in a good shape, but still alive.*

---

mistere29

Saturday, 3rd January, 2004, 04:12 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*Happy New Year!*

*What you are asking is that I recall relative minutia from about 20 years ago.*

---

Well what versions of the material do you use in your AD&D games today. That's what i was really interested in. Or do you play mostly LA now?

Thanks for all the info.

---

Gez

Saturday, 3rd January, 2004, 04:37 PM

Of the Origin of Species...

I thought it had been asked previously, but haven't found it in the archive.

What's the origin of the beholder?

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 3rd January, 2004, 07:26 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **med stud***

*Hi Gary (and merry christmas and happy new year!!)*

*I was wondering something about the names of Erythnul and Nerull; Erythno means red or something like that in latin or greek, and nero means black. Did you name Erythnull and Nerull with that in mind?*

---

Yuletide Greetings, Med Stud,

You are on target with the above. Erythnul was conceived of a bloody, Nerull as dark and against life.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 3rd January, 2004, 07:32 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **mistere29***

*Well what versions of the material do you use in your AD&D games today. That's what i was really interested in. Or do you play mostly LA now?*

*Thanks for all the info.*

---

Right-o!

My regular campaign for the last six years has been a *Legendary Adventure* game one. When I DM OAD&D I will use the UA material is the

players are up for that, otherwise not. I have never played the OA material as written, but I have played in a game run by Francois using his Oriental rules. In fact I returned a thick folder of his Far East material to him on a visit to France back in the late 90s.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 3rd January, 2004, 07:36 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Gez***

*Of the Origin of Species...*

*I thought it had been asked previously, but haven't found it in the archive.*

*What's the origin of the beholder?*

---

Howdy Gez,

I do believe that the question has been asked and answered previously, but it's not a problem to respond again.

Terry Kuntz, one of Rob's brothers, came up with the beholder back in 1974. All I needed to do was a bit of editing to make it a great addition to the terrible monsters to be found in the D&D game.

Happy New Year,  
Gary

---

Darrin Drader

Saturday, 3rd January, 2004, 10:23 PM

Gary,

I write this not as a freelance game designer of any accomplishment, but as a lowly fanboy who has enjoyed your work for the past 20 years, so please don't take offense to my questions.

I know your opinion of 3rd edition is that it is overly complicated with too many things that are too rigidly defined. How do you reconcile that with the fact that Mythus, a game of your creation, must be one of the most complicated collections of RPG rules ever committed to paper and ink? Granted, Lejendary Adventures is a much simpler system, but I am curious what your thoughts are on this.

Along similar lines, why was the Mythus Bestiary mostly a collection of animals? Wouldn't the game have been better served by catalog monsters? When I first purchased that book, I was under the impression that you intended the primary non-human adversareis to be monsters, but then the number of monsters in Necropolis clearly challenged that assumption.

Necropolis and Epic of Aerth were both excellent books, by the way. I was able to use the Epic of Aerth for an AD&D campaign somewhere in the mid-90s, and I'm extremely happy that Necropolis has been converted to D20. I'm still waiting for the right opportunity to use it, though I'm sure that Hall of Many Panes (I think is what you're calling it) may knock that out of immediate contention.

Thank you for taking the time to grace these forums with your presence! I wish you well in 2004.

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 3rd January, 2004, 11:40 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Whisperfoot***

*Gary,*

*I write this not as a freelance game designer of any accomplishment, but as a lowly fanboy who has enjoyed your work for the past 20 years, so please don't take offense to my questions.*

---

New Year's Greetings,

IMO any gamer worth his salt is a fanboy of someone. As I have stated often I sure was. shows enthusiasm and dedication :D

Quote:

---

*I know your opinion of 3rd edition is that it is overly complicated with too many things that are too rigidly defined. How do you reconcile that with the fact that Mythus, a game of your creation, must be one of the most complicated collections of RPG rules ever committed to paper and ink? Granted, Lejendary Adventures is a much simpler system, but I am curious what your thoughts are on this.*

---

Indeed, I wrote the DJ *Mythus* game as a varitable encyclopadia of rules, but the Journey Master was free to strip the system down to a bare framework, add on those parts desired, while the expurgated rules played as well as the deluxe version with all the bells and whistles. Getting the system to work like that was a challenge. When I turned over the mss. for the core rules to GDW, I urged that the *Mythus Prime* book be done first so as to demonstrate that the base system was fairly simple. When GDW finally published the introductory rules sales really jumped.

The *Lejendary Adventure* system is the rules-light refinement of the concept, and it is as adaptable to rules additions as was *Mythus Prime*, only I don't plan to provide complexities and complications, because I don't like to GM or play such games.

Quote:

---



*Along similar lines, why was the Mythus Bestiary mostly a collection of animals? Wouldn't the game have been better served by catalog monsters? When I first purchased that book, I was under the impression that you intended the primary non-human adversaries to be monsters, but then the number of monsters in Necropolis clearly challenged that assumption.*

---

There was the *Phaerie Bestiary* in progress, that work by Dave and Michelle Newton, with some creative input from me, that was meant to cover all of the fantastic monsters and races. I believe that the draft of that work was available online at the DJ fan website for a while, although I can't swear to it. The same is true for the horror rules *Unhallowed*, and perhaps the fantasy science ones, *Chaos Changling*.

Quote:

*Necropolis and Epic of Aerth were both excellent books, by the way. I was able to use the Epic of Aerth for an AD&D campaign somewhere in the mid-90s, and I'm extremely happy that Necropolis has been converted to D20. I'm still waiting for the right opportunity to use it, though I'm sure that Hall of Many Panes (I think is what you're calling it) may knock that out of immediate contention..*

---

Thanks kindly. I spend an inordinate amount of time researching information for the *Epic of Aerth* world setting, and *Necropolis* was a like labor of love--a campaign setting with the main dungeon adventure one that was as deadly as the old ToH...

The *Hall of Many Panes* is a very different sort of module from *Necropolis*, it being a self-contained mini-campaign where the participants are committed to long-term adventuring in order to complete the quest and escape the pocket cosmos. Of course I provide the group with a way out of it is too much, but veteran gamers are not going to be quitters, and the range of challenges in the module cover the whole gamut of the game form, with plenty of exploration and combat because those are the most popular elements.

In summation, the two modules are quite different, and i hope you'll have much entertainment with both!

Quote:

*Thank you for taking the time to grace these forums with your presence! I wish you well in 2004.*

---

Welcome, and rest assured I am happy to be here with fellow gamers...even if so far I am the only one in the whole group age 60 and older :rolleyes:

Cheers,  
Gary

---

mistere29

Sunday, 4th January, 2004, 02:19 AM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by Col\_Pladoh*

*In fact I returned a thick folder of his Far East material to him on a visit to France back in the late 90s.*

---

A shame we never got to see it, or your version of 2e.

---

mistere29

Sunday, 4th January, 2004, 02:33 AM

What ever happened to DJ. I heard that tsr got the right's in a lawsuit or something like that.

In between leaving tsr and creating LA what was your system of choice gary? Did you still play alot of AD&D or did you switch over to DJ?

---

Col\_Pladoh

Sunday, 4th January, 2004, 02:00 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by mistere29*

*What ever happened to DJ. I heard that tsr got the right's in a lawsuit or something like that.*

*In between leaving tsr and creating LA what was your system of choice gary? Did you still play alot of AD&D or did you switch over to DJ?*

---

Fact is that when I separated from TSR I began work immediately on a horror RPG--played the developing system. A chap named Mike McCulley joined me in the design, and that game was ready for publication before *Mythus* was. About that time, though, NEC and JVC got interested in the system, asked for a fantasy game, so that's when I rounded up Dave Newton so as to get *Mythus* complewted on the time table they asked for.

When the new FRPG was introduced at the GTS, a lawsuit was filed by TSR, they claiming it violated the copyright of A/D&D. Quite a stretch that, but only a judge intimately familiar with RPGs would know that and dismiss it. So what followed was a long period of discovery and depositions that ran up a huge lawyers' bill--far more on the TSR end than on ours, four to one is likely. Eventually the suit was settled. TSR paid us a very large sum and they got all the rights to the DJ system and *Mythus*.

I suggested to TSR (Lorraine Williams) that the next time I wrote a new RPG they just offer me \$1 million for the rights to it, thus saving at least that much money.

Immediately after the settlement, I began working on CRPG designs, and that led me in a couple of years to the development of the *Legendary Adventure* game system.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Silver Moon

Sunday, 4th January, 2004, 03:16 PM

Hello Col\_Pladoh,

A "Boot Hill" question for you. In the first Dungeon Masters Guide there are guidelines for Boot Hill/AD&D crossover games. My question is, Did you or Buckshot Blume ever play or DM one? I ask because my group is currently playing our third module in a D&D/Boot Hill hybrid campaign and we are having a great time with it.

---

Col\_Pladoh

Sunday, 4th January, 2004, 04:40 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Silver Moon***

*Hello Col\_Pladoh,*

*A "Boot Hill" question for you. In the first Dungeon Masters Guide there are guidelines for Boot Hill/AD&D crossover games. My question is, Did you or Buckshot Blume ever play or DM one? I ask because my group is currently playing our third module in a D&D/Boot Hill hybrid campaign and we are having a great time with it.*

---

Well, Pilgrim...

The short answer is no. While we did some testing to see that the suggestions actually worked all right, we never did get to a real campaign. That was due to Brian being involved in other things and not having time to devise the basis for a mixed D&D-BH setting.

I really like the idea of mixing magic and Wild West play, and it is great to learn you and your group have done it and are enjoying the result:) I don't know if this is the proper form for a recounting of your campaign, but I'd sure like to hear more! Maybe an email to me at [ggygax@genevaonline.com](mailto:ggygax@genevaonline.com) if you have time and inclination.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

redwing00

Sunday, 4th January, 2004, 07:17 PM

Gary- I'm not quite sure if this question has been asked before as it seems to be a fairly simple one, but how did you pick the races for D&D? In 1ed only dwarves, elves, "hobbits", and humans were PC races. I'm guessing this was drawn from LotR. But in 2ed gnomes came in. What source did you draw these creatures from.

---

johnsemlak

Sunday, 4th January, 2004, 07:51 PM

If I may, I'd like to humbly add one more detail about DJ--The rights to those products are now owned by Wizards of the Coast (like all other TSR material). PDF versions of three of the products are on sale at [www.svgames.com](http://www.svgames.com). I wish they'd put out the *Epic of Aerth*. That's the one I'd really like.

---

Whitey

Sunday, 4th January, 2004, 10:07 PM

Let's rewind time to 1986 - I was eight years old at the time. My friend's older brother was playing D&D [Palace of Silver Princes, IIRC] and I've been fascinated ever since. Thanks for fifteen + years of entertainment, and for your contributions to the RPG community as a whole. I have just one question to pose here, out of the thousands that've come up since then, and have been the root of great RP experiences - it's a tricky epistemological one, and may not have a simple answer. Do evil Outsiders or creatures listed as 'always evil' think of themselves as doing wrong? Or do they think everyone else is being naive or weak? I suppose Good subtyped beings raise a similar issue.

Thanks again,  
Whitey

---

Col\_Pladoh

Sunday, 4th January, 2004, 11:06 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **redwing00***

*Gary- I'm not quite sure if this question has been asked before as it seems to be a fairly simple one, but how did you pick the races for D&D? In 1ed only dwarves, elves, "hobbits", and humans were PC races. I'm guessing this was drawn from LotR. But in 2ed gnomes came in. What source did you draw these creatures from.*

---

Howdy!

Fact is that dwarves and elves came from mythology and folklore, the hobbit from JRRT's work. That mix was selected to attract readers of the "Rings Trilogy," of course. Later on I added gnomes to D&D to broaden the choices for non-human PCs, as I did in AD&D. This was done because a number of players, myself included, were tired of having so many dwarves, elves, and halflings in the group of adventurers. In my campaign a party of 12 would have three front rank halflings, a second rank of dwarves, elves in the third rank, and the fourth rank the humans--mainly magic-users and clerics.

Cheers,  
Gary

All times are GMT +1. The time now is 03:44 PM.

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Col\_Pladoh

Sunday, 4th January, 2004, 11:18 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Whitey***

*Let's rewind time to 1986 - I was eight years old at the time. My friend's older brother was playing D&D [Palace of Silver Princes, IIRC] and I've been fascinated ever since. Thanks for fifteen + years of entertainment, and for your contributions to the RPG community as a whole. I have just one question to pose here, out of the thousands that've come up since then, and have been the root of great RP experiences - it's a tricky epistemological one, and may not have a simple answer. Do evil Outsiders or creatures listed as 'always evil' think of themselves as doing wrong? Or do they think everyone else is being naive or weak? I suppose Good subtyped beings raise a similar issue.*

*Thanks again,  
Whitey*

---

Salut!

Semantics can be a problem. "Outsiders" is a problem term with me, as I don't think it appropos in describing creatures and entities of unusual sort. Ah well, that aside, semantics is a problem in regards to defining "evil" and "wrong."

In my view those wholly evil creatures are malign and purposefully wicked. To their way of thinking, "wrong" is desirable, mainly when they are doing it to others, not being done themselves. Of course they consider all others not of the same mindset as naive, weak, foolish, and gullible. "Wrong" is subjective, something the non-evil creatures have invented, and a weakness connected to conscience, something the evil ones do not have.

A W.C. Fields line is a working axiom for evil: "Never give a sucker an even break."

That's how I see it ;)

Gary

mistere29

Monday, 5th January, 2004, 09:05 PM

Gary, i didn't know you worked in the CRPG field. What games did you work own.

Did you ever play much DJ before you created LA, or did you kind of give up on it when TSR got the rights?

Col\_Pladoh

Monday, 5th January, 2004, 10:03 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **mistere29***

*Gary, i didn't know you worked in the CRPG field. What games did you work own.*

*Did you ever play much DJ before you created LA, or did you kind of give up on it when TSR got the rights?*

---

There was a DJ/Mythus CRPG being done by NEC-JVC that I was inputing on, and had written a comic book introduction for. that was killed when TSR files its bogus lawsuit. I then did about 30 computer game proposals, two got optioned and were going forward. The first was killed by us when new management demanded contract changes that were impossible. The second was axed when the developer was sold off. That is when I returned to paper RPGs.

The development of the DJ game system went on for about five years. During that time I played the horror game for about two years and the fantasy game for about the same period. It got so that I could turn out a dozen completed Heroic Personas in a day's time;) When we took TSR's settlement money I did indeed cease playing the DJ system and begin on new ones for the CRPGs. As I mentioned, that exercise convinced me that I really preferred a rules-light system with skill-bundles, so the LA game system was born.

Cheers,  
Gary

grodog

Thursday, 8th January, 2004, 04:39 PM

attn Moderators!

Hey someone with Moderator status----

A moderator was kind enough to place Part IV of this series in the archive meta-forum; would someone please do the same for parts 1-3 as well (you can back-track through the links from 4 to 3 to 2 to 1).

---

Henry

Thursday, 8th January, 2004, 05:57 PM

Allan, I've moved them for you. As a note, I also changed the titles of the first two to include the words, "Part I" and "Part II" to make searching easier.

Can't lose these babies to obscurity! That'd be like losing Louis Armstrong's jam tracks! :)

---

grodog

Thursday, 8th January, 2004, 07:47 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Henry***

*Allan, I've moved them for you. As a note, I also changed the titles of the first two to include the words, "Part I" and "Part II" to make searching easier.*

*Can't lose these babies to obscurity! That'd be like losing Louis Armstrong's jam tracks! :)*

---

Thanks Henry! :D

---

PowerWordDumb

Thursday, 8th January, 2004, 08:25 PM

Hi Grodog,

It's been 3+ weeks since Gary responded to your request for changes to your page, and since then Gez has added some more. Can I politely request a little more speed in acting upon Gary's valuable input so as to keep the info flowing?

Many thanks!

---

mistere29

Friday, 9th January, 2004, 02:26 AM

What's up with [www.egarygygax.com](http://www.egarygygax.com). You got the new domain name but no content was ever moved to the site?

---

Sir Elton

Friday, 9th January, 2004, 02:59 AM

Gary,

I would like to know something. Rewinding back to 1986 as well (when I was 12 and I got the basic set), I noticed that you could explore gothic horror themes with the selection of monsters in D&D. In other words, some of the monsters are clearly associated with horror (Golems, vampires, zombies, ghouls, lycanthropes like the Loupe Garou). So it is possible to play D&D with a high horror bent. Did you think about this when you put D&D together?

---

grodog

Friday, 9th January, 2004, 03:32 AM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **PowerWordDumb***

*Hi Grodog,*

*It's been 3+ weeks since Gary responded to your request for changes to your page, and since then Gez has added some more. Can I politely request a little more speed in acting upon Gary's valuable input so as to keep the info flowing?*

*Many thanks!*

---

LOL PWD :D I've been away from my PC for two of those three weeks on holiday, but I plan to get some updates done on the page soon. I'll post here to let folks know that they're done.

FWIW, IIRC, Gez's comment about Bombadil being misspelled is incorrect: Ward's PC wasn't spelled the same as Tolkien's character. I'll validate that one way or the other, though, and append a [sic] if it's intentionally misspelled from Tolkien's version.

---

mistere29

Friday, 9th January, 2004, 03:23 PM

Gary, i read in an old interview

"by creating the village of Hommlet and the temple [sic] of Elemental Evil to test some ideas I had about random dungeons, and outdoor terrain so forth."

Could you elaborate a bit on this. Was the pre-Metzner draft largely designed by the random tables in the dmg?

---

cimerians

Sunday, 11th January, 2004, 03:31 AM

archive

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Henry***

Allan, I've moved them for you. As a note, I also changed the titles of the first two to include the words, "Part I" and "Part II" to make searching easier.

Can't lose these babies to obscurity! That'd be like losing Louis Armstrong's jam tracks!

---

Anybody can give us a quick link to the archives?

(My search here doesn't work)

thanks

---

grodog

Tuesday, 13th January, 2004, 11:12 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **cimerians**

Anybody can give us a quick link to the archives?

(My search here doesn't work)

thanks

---

The archive for Part IV is at <http://www.enworld.org/forums/forumdisplay.php?f=52> and I thought I through III were there too, but I don't see them. (Henry, are we looking in the wrong place??).

---

grodog

Tuesday, 13th January, 2004, 11:21 PM

Gary, another question from TSR's early days for you.

In the original, separate editions of the Dungeon Geomorphs and the Outdoor Geomorphs--Walled City, you provided some wonderful examples of dungeon- and city-based encounters (tricks, traps, monsters, city businesses and NPCs, etc.). These were all later dropped from the collected edition of the Dungeon Geomorphs (product 9048, with the red kid-in-the-candystore cover illustration as he populates his dungeon), and the Outdoor Geomorphs were never collected/reprinted (possibly because of low sales/interest?).

Was the material you included in the original geomorphs all drawn from the Greyhawk campaign? The Walled City mentions the Lake of Unknown Depths, so that seems a sure fit, but what about the dungeon geomorph encounters? Also, do you know why your original material from the separate geomorph sets was not included with the reprint?

Thanks again, as always :D

---

gordonknox

Wednesday, 14th January, 2004, 08:34 PM

L

Hello Mr. Gygax,

I would just like to get your opinion on the "L" series of 1st edition modules. I really enjoy them, even the lost L3. Did you play in these campaigns?

Also, have you heard anything on the revamping and resurrection of L4 and L5?

Thank you,

gk

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 24th January, 2004, 01:48 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **mistere29**

What's up with [www.egarygygax.com](http://www.egarygygax.com). You got the new domain name but no content was ever moved to the site?

---

When the old URL was lost to pirates we set up the new one, [www.egarygygax.com](http://www.egarygygax.com) but...

I am so busy I haven't the time to devote to the new website, and so it has languished. There is a willing webmaster, but there's no chance I can spend much time and effort on the project, so it is in limbo awaiting something of a response from me. I guess I'd better see about getting something simple up and maybe a blogging section...

Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 24th January, 2004, 01:55 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Sir Elton**

Gary,

*I would like to know something. Rewinding back to 1986 as well (when I was 12 and I got the basic set), I noticed that you could explore gothic horror themes with the selection of monsters in D&D. In other words, some of the monsters are clearly associated with horror (Golems, vampires, zombies, ghouls, lycanthropes like the Loupe Garou). So it is possible to play D&D with a high horror bent. Did you think about this when you put D&D together?*

---

Indeed I did, Sir Elton. As a longtime fan of HPL and the horror genre, I included it in the broad basis for play. This was picked up well by another designer in the *Ravenloft* modules, too;)

As a DM I did only one pure horror adventure, one where the PCs were young Boy Scouts who were lost, came upon a deserted mansion out in the country. The players had a great time, and Jim Ward then asked my permission to use the general theme for *The Mansion of the Mad Dr. Ludlow*, that being given gladly.

I'd have done more, but there were so many things to deal with that I never got the chance. That's why the original genre for the *Dangerous Journeys* RPG system was horror, *Unhallowed*.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 24th January, 2004, 02:01 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **mistere29***

*Gary, i read in an old interview*

*"by creating the village of Hommlet and the temple [sic] of Elemental Evil to test some ideas I had about random dungeons, and outdoor terrain so forth."*

*Could you elaborate a bit on this. Was the pre-Metzner draft largely designed by the random tables in the dm?*

---

Howdy!

The village and main temple areas were carefully mapped before I began adventure sessions in the area. The random generation was used mainly in developing the land around the village and some of the side areas surrounding the main rooms I had done for the temple dungeons.

As a side note, the random tables worked quite well, but they took too long. I found that it was easier and quicker for me to just bash ahead as usual and put in whatever I liked at the moment.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 24th January, 2004, 02:09 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **grodog***

*Gary, another question from TSR's early days for you.*

*In the original, separate editions of the Dungeon Geomorphs and the Outdoor Geomorphs--Walled City, you provided some wonderful examples of dungeon- and city-based encounters (tricks, traps, monsters, city businesses and NPCs, etc.). These were all later dropped from the collected edition of the Dungeon Geomorphs (product 9048, with the red kid-in-the-candystore cover illustration as he populates his dungeon), and the Outdoor Geomorphs were never collected/reprinted (possibly because of low sales/interest?).*

*Was the material you included in the original geomorphs all drawn from the Greyhawk campaign? The Walled City mentions the Lake of Unknown Depths, so that seems a sure fit, but what about the dungeon geomorph encounters? Also, do you know why your original material from the separate geomorph sets was not included with the reprint?*

*Thanks again, as always :D*

---

When it was apparent to me that the players would appreciate some assistance in design, the geomorphs, I simply sat down and drew (and wrote) up the material. I used some familiar names, but none of the material I did was taken from anything other than my imagination at the time.

The decision to include what was in the reprint was not in my perview, so I can't say why Brian or Kevin did as they did. As I recall, I wasn't receiving any royalties for the geomorphs, so I don't remember sales figures, but at least initially all the sets did quite well. shops wanted higher price points and fewer SKUs, though. and thus the form of the reprinted material.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 24th January, 2004, 02:16 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **gordonknox***

*Hello Mr. Gygax,*

*I would just like to get your opinion on the "L" series of 1st edition modules. I really enjoy them, even the lost L3. Did you play in these campaigns?*

*Also, have you heard anything on the revamping and resurrection of L4 and L5?*

*Thank you,*

*gk*

---

Feel free to address me as Gary if you like.

That said, I am not able to give you a cogent response, as I never DMed the L series, played a PC in only one or two of them.

As you might expect, my main DMing efforts were always centered around the World of Greyhawk and the various dungeon areas set by me therein so as to both serve my group and keep on supplying module material. Writing adventure modules has always been a demanding task to me, unlike winging like material for active players, putting it on paper is a chore. Coming up with new and different things, not having one module like any of the others (I hope) means a lot of extra time and effort.

Cheers,  
Gary



Geoffrey

Saturday, 24th January, 2004, 05:10 PM

Hello Gary!

How is HALL OF MANY PANES coming along? When can we expect to walk into our local game store and be blown away by seeing this grand-daddy of all adventures on the shelf?

I can't think of a better time to start a Lejendary Adventure campaign!

BTW, how closely is HALL OF MANY PANES going to be tied into the Lejendary Earth? Will it be easy to use in a homemade campaign setting?

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 24th January, 2004, 08:06 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Geoffrey****Hello Gary!**How is HALL OF MANY PANES coming along? When can we expect to walk into our local game store and be blown away by seeing this grand-daddy of all adventures on the shelf?**I can't think of a better time to start a Lejendary Adventure campaign!**BTW, how closely is HALL OF MANY PANES going to be tied into the Lejendary Earth? Will it be easy to use in a homemade campaign setting?*

Geoffrey, funny you should ask that just now. I have the 500+ page final manuscript for the *Hall of Many Panes* even now, and am about 150 pp. into its final check and minor edit. I'll be turning it back to the Trolls in a few weeks, and meantime they are lining up the interior art, the cover being set.

I am told the product will be launched at Origins (or if it slips possibly GenCon).

The module begins on virtually any world, but it subsumes the pantheons active on the Lejendary Earth world--mainly the Celtic, but also the Egyptian. Otherwise, most of the actual play activity takes place in an off-world location, so placement isn't a problem.

Cheers,  
Gary

redwing00

Saturday, 24th January, 2004, 09:15 PM

I'm sorry to bring back up a question I've already asked, but I'm still a little curious. You answered WHY you put gnomes into the game, but I'm just wondering WHERE you got them. I know there are gnomes all throughout mythology, but each description varies from culture to culture. Did you take the gnome from one particular culture or combine traits from each culture? Why do you think gnomes would have appealed to gamers (when you introduced them, since there are already to "short" races: dwarves and halflings)

another question: you answered in my previous question that dwarves and elves came from myth and folklore. Again, each description varies by culture. Which did you draw from? I'm assuming Norse, but I'm not quite sure.

Thank you Gary!

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 24th January, 2004, 10:47 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **redwing00****I'm sorry to bring back up a question I've already asked, but I'm still a little curious. You answered WHY you put gnomes into the game, but I'm just wondering WHERE you got them. I know there are gnomes all throughout mythology, but each description varies from culture to culture. Did you take the gnome from one particular culture or combine traits from each culture? Why do you think gnomes would have appealed to gamers (when you introduced them, since there are already to "short" races: dwarves and halflings)**another question: you answered in my previous question that dwarves and elves came from myth and folklore. Again, each description varies by culture. Which did you draw from? I'm assuming Norse, but I'm not quite sure.**Thank you Gary!*

Happy to respond, Redwing00 :)

Gnomes in myth were created as one of the four elementals, that of earth. I took what I recalled from fairy tales and folklore about mine spirits to

create a unique race for the D&D game. Yes, there were already halflings and dwarves, but i made the gnomes sufficiently different so as to allow another choice for character race. I have used it in a PC, he being a gnome illusionist-thief.

Inspiration for the D&D dwarves came from the Norse mythology, legends, and fairy tales. Elves came mainly from folklore and fairy tales.

I have read all the Andrew Lang (various colors in the titles) save the Yellow Book of Fairy Tales, Andersen, and Brothers Grimm fairy tales as well as many a book on folklore and legends.

Halflings were mainly drawn from JRRT's fiction, of course.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

**talinthas**

Saturday, 24th January, 2004, 11:36 PM

hey gary, i've always wanted to know this- Why did you release the 1st edition AD&D monster manual before the other two books?

---

**grodog**

Sunday, 25th January, 2004, 06:02 AM

Thanks for the replies on the geomorphs, Gary.

FYI, some folks are talking about Fritz Leiber and his rumored involvement with ghost-writing D&D rules and running D&D games over at <http://www.enworld.org/forums/showthread.php?t=75019>

IIRC, Fritz and Harry designed the 1975 TSR Lankhmar boardgame, but I've never heard that either played D&D or helped to write the rules....

---

**grodog**

Sunday, 25th January, 2004, 06:21 AM

double-post

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**Manzanita**

Sunday, 25th January, 2004, 06:41 AM

I think it's great that your sons Ernie and Luke became active in the games you created. I'm curious if your daughters ever played. If not, I wonder if you have any thoughts on that.

By the way, Grodog, when are you going to update your CY175 campaign log on your website?

Thanks  
Grant

---

**Bob the Reaver**

Sunday, 25th January, 2004, 07:32 AM

Hello Gary,  
Please excuse me if this question has been asked before.

I was wondering about your apperance on the Futurerama television show. I was very excited to see your likeness on this exellent comedy. I guess I was wondering about whether or not you had a chance to meet any of your co stars during the recording. Al Gore Mr Hawkings etc.

A few days ago I belive I read somewhere that Dnd spawned a billion dollar buisness (the Rpg industry in the past 25 years?). We owe alot to you Mr. Gygax. I live and breathe the fantasy of imagination's. I belive it all started with my first set of dnd books. Thank you very much.

---

**Col\_Pladoh**

Sunday, 25th January, 2004, 12:51 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **talinthas***

*hey gary, i've always wanted to know this- Why did you release the 1st edition AD&D monster manual before the other two books?*

---

I decided to create the MM as the initial part of the new AD&D system because it would be usable by all the D&D players, and the entry information in the book would whet appetites for the new rules. It was also the easiest one to put together, since I had been doing penciled-in new system stat sheets for all the old monsters, as well as writing up a lot of new ones. I had a box in my office, and I'd toss the rough stat sheets into it each day. Mike Carr would collect them and type them up--or have someone else do it, so in no time at all there was sufficient material for the MM even as I was developing the whole of the material for the system, beginning on the PHB.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

**Col\_Pladoh**

Sunday, 25th January, 2004, 01:33 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **grodog***

*Thanks for the replies on the geomorphs, Gary.*

*FYI, some folks are talking about Fritz Leiber and his rumored involvement with ghost-writing D&D rules and running D&D games over at <http://www.enworld.org/forums/showthread.php?t=75019>*

Welcome Allan:)

Thanks for your heads up on regards to Fritz. I went on over to that thread and posted a couple of messages to set things straight. You are correct, of course, about Fritz and Harry not being RPGers, not doing any rules writing. Rumors surely do become odd over time...

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Melan

Sunday, 25th January, 2004, 01:39 PM

Greetings!

Gary, how did TSR release the Empire of the Petal Throne game? Was it solely M.A.R. Barker's creation (which seems to be my guess - it is too well edited for a TSR product of that age. :D ), or did TSR do most of the rules? Also, what do you think about the system therein as an alternative approach to OD&D?

---

Col\_Pladoh

Sunday, 25th January, 2004, 01:41 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Manzanita***

*I think it's great that your sons Ernie and Luke became active in the games you created. I'm curious if your daughters ever played. If not, I wonder if you have any thoughts on that.*

*By the way, Grodog, when are you going to update your CY175 campaign log on your website?*

*Thanks  
Grant*

---

Well Darn!

Here I thought that most everybody knew that the first two play-testers for the D&D game were my son Ernie and my daughter Elise. They played the first dungeon adventure, were joined the next day by Don Kaye and Rob Kuntz.

Elise played for a few months, then lost interest. Her younger sisters, Heidi and Cindy, got into D&D later on. Those two used to make Luke DM for them when he was very young, tell him what treasure that they found. When he complained to me about that I set him straight, and shortly after that his sisters quit playing, the greedy power gamers :D

As I have often said, I am a biological determinist, and there is no question that male and female brains are different. It is apparent to me that by and large females do not derive the same inner satisfaction from playing games as a hobby that males do. It isn't that females can't play games well, it is just that it isn't a compelling activity to them as is the case for males.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Sunday, 25th January, 2004, 01:48 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Bob the Reaver***

*Hello Gary,  
Please excuse me if this question has been asked before.*

*I was wondering about your appearance on the Futurama television show. I was very excited to see your likeness on this excellent comedy. I guess I was wondering about whether or not you had a chance to meet any of your co-stars during the recording. Al Gore Mr Hawkings etc.*

*A few days ago I believe I read somewhere that Dnd spawned a billion dollar business (the Rpg industry in the past 25 years?). We owe a lot to you Mr. Gygax. I live and breathe the fantasy of imagination's. I believe it all started with my first set of dnd books. Thank you very much.*

---

I wish...

The fact is that although I urged the producers of the *Futurama* Show to give me a larger part, make me a regular on the program, and in any case fly me out to the West Coast, it was in vain. I got the script and then spoke my lines over a clean telephone line from Milwaukee: ( Thus I met no one in person--although David X. Cohen and I did spend a fair bit of time chatting before it was time for me to be recorded speaking my part.

I had to do a second recording session a couple of weeks after the initial one, a new script being furnished because David Duchovny was out of the episode and VP Al Gore replacing him in the role of team leader. That actually got me a couple of extra lines too :p

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Sunday, 25th January, 2004, 01:56 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Melan**

Greetings!

Gary, how did TSR release the *Empire of the Petal Throne* game? Was it solely M.A.R. Barker's creation (which seems to be my guess - it is too well edited for a TSR product of that age. :D ), or did TSR do most of the rules? Also, what do you think about the system therein as an alternative approach to OD&D?

---

Howdy:)

When Phil Barker got ahold of D&D he realized the system was perfect for use in expressing a game based on his fantasy world creation, Tekumel. Phil lifted large sections of the D&D game and was planning on publishing, but I heard about it and put the breaks onto that. I informed him that if TSR was the publisher, fine, otherwise, he had better devise new rules. The Good Professor was happy to agree, so we did a deluxe RPG, the EPT game that all the guys at TSR really loved.

You are right about the ms. Phil sent it in, and it was near perfect--same with his *War of Wizards* game. Those mss. made us very happy, of course :cool:

As for the EPT system, I really liked it for Tekumel, but we never adopted it for our regular fantasy adventuring. As it's been a couple of decades since last I played it, more I can't venture.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Bregh

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 01:19 AM

Hey, Gary :D!

I come bearing a question re: the mechanics and cosmology of the planes in OAD&D, specifically with regard to how the manner in which they've been treated by diverse designers in numerous products.

Initially (earliest appearances in The Dragon, the PHB, Kuntz and Ward's Deities and Demigods) there's little mechanical information--some notes on the multi-planar existence of demons, undead, powerful swords, et al, and some light flavour references and text (the cover of the first printing DMG, with the City of Brass over a burning sea of lava, a few references in MMII to what certain layers of the Abyss look like, and so on). As time marches on we have modules like Q1 (Demon Web Pits) and Roger Moore's articles on the Astral Plane in Dragon where we get a slew of detailed mechanics, and some interesting flavour developments (Int and Wis acting as Str and Dex). By the time of the Manual of the Planes we have some very specific and detailed information on how exactly things work in the planes, and what, in particular, they "look" like. Places like the Ethereal Plane and the Plane of Elemental Fire, particularly, are described in quite a different manner than what we got initially.

My question is this, was this eventual development of the planes, mechanically and descriptively, in concert with what you envisioned (in terms of play and setting), or is it the end result of several smiths distilling a brew, which, while palatable and enjoyed by many, is ultimately not what "your recipe" called for?

(I believe I know your answer to this, likely from some other board in time and space, but I ask it again in order to have clarification for several here who seem interested. Also, I've tried to avoid "leading" you one way or another. :o )

As always, your time and answers are most appreciated.

--B

---

mattcolville

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 04:39 AM

Gary-

Hello! First, on behalf of myself and everyone in my game group, I want to thank you for your inestimable contribution to the creation of the hobby we all love. I sometimes like to think we're playing the game...even this new version...the way you did/would now. I genuinely feel, perhaps delusionally, that the spirit of the games you played is transmitted via tradition and convention play and rulebooks and articles over the years to us.

My only question for the moment involves the classes in 1st ed. AD&D and their inspiration. In many discussions about design, I've referenced those classes and said "If there had never been Aragorn, there would be no Ranger." Ditto the Thief with the Grey Mouser. It's presumptuous of me to say such a thing, especially considering you're right here and I can just ask you. :) To what extent were the original classes inspired by/modeled on specific characters?

Ok, I lied, I have another question.

To what extent, if any, would you say politics and war played a role in your games? My first experiences with D&D were in a Greyhawk game modeled closely after Glen Cook's Black Company series and I've always felt A: that Greyhawk was very much a realm in which political realities could play a part and B: it fit well with the tone of the Black Company books, of which I do not know if you are aware.

After 20 years of no good mass combat/realms management solution for D&D apart from things we kitbashed together, I participated in the core design of such a product, recently released for 3.0/3.5. Did you have a need for such a thing and, if so, how did you resolve such issues? Your characters obviously became powerful and influential, some were landed nobles, yes? How did they rule their realms?

Thanks for your generosity in these threads.

---

Col\_Pladoh

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 01:13 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Bregb**

Hey, Gary :D!

I come bearing a question re: the mechanics and cosmology of the planes in OAD&D, specifically with regard to how the manner in which they've been treated by divers designers in numerous products.

[snippage]

My question is this, was this eventual development of the planes, mechanically and descriptively, in concert with what you envisioned (in terms of play and setting), or is it the end result of several smiths distilling a brew, which, while palatable and enjoyed by many, is ultimately not what "your recipe" called for?

(I believe I know your answer to this, likely from some other board in time and space, but I ask it again in order to have clarification for several here who seem interested. Also, I've tried to avoid "leading" you one way or another. :o )

As always, your time and answers are most appreciated.

--B

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If you assumed that the majority of the resulting planar material was not what I envisaged, you are on the money. Treating the many planes named in the DMG would be a long and demanding task, and it is one I never got to. About the closest to an extensive treatment of any one of them other than the PMP is what I wrote about the Abyss in the Gord yarns.

Skip Williams and I put together extensive notes for a treatment of the Plane of Shadow, but that never got past the preliminary stage because of my separation from TSR at the end of 1985.

That's about all I can say, other than I do hope to include a generic treatment of the cosmos in the Gygaxian Fantasy Worlds reference book series, but I hope to advise only, not author it, as right now I have over two years of work on other projects that needs to be done;)

Cheers,  
Gary

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Col\_Pladoh

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 01:39 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **mattcolville**

Gary-

*Hello! First, on behalf of myself and everyone in my game group, I want to thank you for your inestimable contribution to the creation of the hobby we all love. I sometimes like to think we're playing the game...even this new version...the way you did/would now. I genuinely feel, perhaps delusionally, that the spirit of the games you played is transmitted via tradition and convention play and rulebooks and articles over the years to us.*

Howdy Matt,

Welcome, and rest assured I've enjoyed myself a great deal in the process.

Quote:

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*My only question for the moment involves the classes in 1st ed. AD&D and their inspiration. In many discussions about design, I've referenced those classes and said "If there had never been Aragorn, there would be no Ranger." Ditto the Thief with the Grey Mouser. It's presumptuous of me to say such a thing, especially considering you're right here and I can just ask you. :) To what extent were the original classes inspired by/modeled on specific characters?*

The Ranger class was originally devised by Joe Fischer, then a regular in my D&D game group. I published his initial treatment of the class in *The Strategic Review*, thereafter revised it and included it in the core game rules. Of course it is apparent that Joe based the class on JRRT's work and Aragorn. Likely a forester of some sort would have been created at some point, but it would have been quite different from the Ranger as it appeared. certainly.

The Thief was based on Jack of Shadows (Zelazny) and Cugel (Vance) with a touch of REH's Conan, rather than solely on the Gray Mouser. Mouser was too good a swordsman to serve as the pure model.

What was done was to build game characters based on broad archetypes, and where there were strong fictional characters of the archetypal sort, use them as central models.

Quote:

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*Ok, I lied, I have another question.*

*To what extent, if any, would you say politics and war played a role in your games? My first experiences with D&D were in a Greyhawk game modeled closely after Glen Cook's Black Company series and I've always felt A: that Greyhawk was very much a realm in which political realities could play a part and B: it fit well with the tone of the Black Company books, of which I do not know if you are aware.*

*After 20 years of no good mass combat/realm management solution for D&D apart from things we kitbashed together, I participated in the core design of such a product, recently released for 3.0/3.5. Did you have a need for such a thing and, if so, how did you resolve such issues? Your characters obviously became powerful and influential, some were landed nobles, yes? How did they rule their realms?*

*Thanks for your generosity in these threads.*

---

In general the player group in my campaign were not much interested in politics and warfare. When I played, my PCs I was always meddling in politics and had a large army, so some warfare was played out with Rob as the DM. The lands rules by my PCs, that is Mordenkainen and his followers, were gained by his formation of a raiding force, that being developed into a standing army. It was supported initially by raiding and pillaging opponents, then by the resources of the territory gained by military action. As it was mainly against aggressive humanoid forces and nomadic raiders, the settled states around his holdings were happy to support and trade with the newly formed political entity.

Greyhawk was set up to enable both political play and large-scale warfare; and I agree that Glen Cook's "Black Company" is a good reference for including such considerations in a campaign. I made a stab at mass combat with *Swords & Spells*, but I believe its system was too abstract for most D&Ders who were not inculcated in large-scale military miniatures play.

As I don't play new D&D I can't comment on the current efforts to provide rules for such warfare.

Cheers,  
Gary

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## Mirth

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 01:47 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*Skip Williams and I put together extensive notes for a treatment of the Plane of Shadow, but that never got past the preliminary stage because of my separation from TSR at the end of 1985.*

---

:eek: I for one would LOVE to see this, Gary. Any possibility of contacting Skip and tweaking this enough to release under d20 or OGL? (That assumes that the material is still around and both of you are even interested, of course :D )

Jay

Col\_Pladoh

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 02:24 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by Mirth*

:eek: I for one would LOVE to see this, Gary. Any possibility of contacting Skip and tweaking this enough to release under d20 or OGL? (That assumes that the material is still around and both of you are even interested, of course :D )

Jay

Well, Jay...

The notes are still in a file somewhere in the basement here, and they can be found, wife Gail assures me. However, in regards to Skip, he seems uninclined to go forward. I proposed we do that back around 1996, and at that time he declined. Since then I've heard nothing from him. Of course I could go ahead and develop the material on my own, but there is a co-mingling of ideas, so Skip would have a half interest in it. As I have plenty of other work, I'm not about to do all the design and share payments with him without his equal input;

Cheers,  
Gary

mistere29

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 03:39 PM

A while ago, you tried to convince wizards to release the OAD&D material alongside the new stuff. Kind of like a collectors edition. Since wizards had new management now, did you ever try to pitch the idea again.

Col\_Pladoh

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 04:21 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by mistere29*

A while ago, you tried to convince wizards to release the OAD&D material alongside the new stuff. Kind of like a collectors edition. Since wizards had new management now, did you ever try to pitch the idea again.

Wizards has licensed out the OAD&D system to Kenzer, so they won't be publishing anything using it. Even if they did, though, the same problem of co-mingling of ideas exists.

If Skip were to contact me now and say he wanted to go forward, my writing schedule is filled for the next two or so years.

Cheers,  
Gary

Piratecat

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 04:24 PM

Interesting. Not to go off on a tangent, but to what extent do you find that rules drive an adventure design? I'm curious what sort of challenges you're facing as you match up creative thinking with mandated rules.

Gray Mouser

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 04:34 PM

Greyhawk PC Wizards

Gary,

I know that Bigby the Mage started out as an apprentice to Mordenkainen (after, I have heard, being captured by Mordyl). I was wondering, were there ever any other PC mages that had dealing either with their former masters or who acquired any apprentices of their own and did these interactions ever have repercussions in your campaign? I'd be interested to know if Tenser, Otto or Drawmij (aka Bombadil) ever undertook any quests for their former mentors, or sent their apprentices on any such quests.

Thanks! (And I cannot wait for Zagyg's Castle, btw!),

Gray Mouser

(Frustrated Mage but adept thief and swordsman :-)

Col\_Pladoh

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 05:16 PM

Quote:



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Originally Posted by **Piratecat**

Interesting. Not to go off on a tangent, but to what extent do you find that rules drive an adventure design? I'm curious what sort of challenges you're facing as you match up creative thinking with mandated rules.

---

Howdy Piratecat:)

The rules determine what can and can not be done, how things operate when the characters interact with the environment. Thus while some rules are necessary to give form to the material being written, the fewer the better as far as I am concerned. Having few rules means more creative freedom, the ability to be inventive in devising new and interesting places, persons, creatures, and things. It's a matter of being free to think and design outside the box, if you will. Where rules are extensive, creating new material for an adventure becomes more burdensome too, of course.

This is why I have come to regard less as more, and prefer a rules-light system;)

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 05:26 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Gray Mouser**

Gary,

*I know that Bigby the Mage started out as an apprentice to Mordenkainen (after, I have heard, being captured by Mordyl). I was wondering, were there ever any other PC mages that had dealing either with their former masters or who acquired any apprentices of their own and did these interactions ever have repercussions in your campaign? I'd be interested to know if Tenser, Otto or Drawmij (aka Bombadil) ever undertook any quests for their former mentors, or sent their apprentices on any such quests.*

*Thanks! (And I cannot wait for Zagyg's Castle, btw!)*

Gray Mouser

*(Frustrated Mage but adept thief and swordsman :-)*

---

Hi Mauser,

To the best of my recollection, Mordenkainen was the only PC that made a habit of capturing and enlisting NPCs in my campaign. Tenser, Otto, et al. were PCs created by their respective players. I must say that Mordie was most assiduous in his fair treatment of Bigby, supplying him with much in the way of magical rewards, treating him as an equal, and sharing fairly with him, thus winning his loyalty--helped by Mordenkainen's high Charisma score certainly.

As an aside, when Jim Ward was playing his elf PC, that worthy read a curse scroll, and as luck would have it the destination for his transference was the *Starship Warden*. The Vigilists discovered the "mutant" newcomer, enlisted him in their ranks, and requisitioned his Fireball Wand. that device became the most potent weapon in the group's arsenal. Meantime, the elf gardened, raising herbs, sought means to return to his own universe. Jim was not happy at all, but the rest of us playing in his MA campaign were most pleased.

Gary

---

Piratecat

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 06:00 PM

Heh - I think Jim mentioned this in a recent editorial he wrote. He's *still* pissed. :D

---

Noskov

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 06:51 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

Hi Mauser,

*...helped by Mordenkainen's high Charisma score certainly.*

Gary

---

First, I must say that I am truly honored.

This brings a question to mind that I've been dealing with lately.

What was the original intention of Charisma and how was it meant to be implemented in a campaign? My experience of playing has been that almost no DM uses Charisma. Most often, it's where the lowest score goes when players are creating their PCs (unless it is an requirement of their chosen class). The way my DM structured his game was to have a broad idea in mind and the rest was just based off of what the characters did and basically played on the fly. My campaigns were always the same. Only lately have I begun to actually plan out things before hand....Only because plots and storylines are now built around the characters and their personalities to encourage more roll playing and make the players more interested in their characters and their characters futures. It seems that when playing on the fly, Charisma becomes almost worthless. You have said that you prefer the more open types of campaigns (I think) similar to what I am accustomed to playing. When you play those types of campaigns, how do you use Charisma?



Thanks

---

RFisher

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 07:46 PM

Gary,

Let me add one more voice to the chorus thanking you for your seminal work upon which so much of our hobby is built. After managing to work my way through all five parts of this Q&A, I still managed to think of a question or two I didn't see answered.

(1) Regarding OAD&D (or, I suppose, OD&D + the Greyhawk supplement, though I never played that): Why exceptional strength? Aren't 18s uncommon enough? Why did Fighters need to subdivide the prime requisite thus, but other classes didn't? Why not continue to scores 19+ instead of subdividing 18?

(2) Any idea what Tom Moldvay is doing these days?

(3) I currently count myself among those who favor the Basic Set edited by Moldvay and the Expert Set edited by Cook (both released in 1981) over most other editions of D&D. Any recollections/opinions you may have about the development of those sets would be welcome.

I look forward to getting my group to try out the Legendary Adventures Quickstart when the next chance between campaigns occurs. It looks like good fun. (Though, I think I differ with you decision to eschew standard RPG jargon. Having played & read numerous systems besides D&D, I personally find it more of an obstacle to comprehension than an aid to break from a D&D mindset.)

TIA

---

Col\_Pladoh

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 10:07 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Piratecat***

*Heh - I think Jim mentioned this in a recent editorial he wrote. He's still pissed. :D*

---

Heh, and well the PCs that form the Vigilists know the evil elf's desire to recover his wand and leave them, so a close watch is kept on him at all times. For once Jim is getting the shaft in his own game, where characters work miracles to gain a tech item only to discover its damage seems to work mainly against PCs and not his monsters. That wand of fireballs is a treasure for sure:)

I love playing MA, and Jim is an excellent GM, but one must take all measures to assure one's PC in his campaign survives...

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 10:44 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Noskov***

*First, I must say that I am truly honored.*

*This brings a question to mind that I've been dealing with lately.*

*What was the original intention of Charisma and how was it meant to be implemented in a campaign? [snip]*  
*Thanks*

---

Salut Noskov,

My pleasure to be of service:)

As stated in the rules, Charisma is meant to affect the reactions of characters--whether newly met NPCs or familiar ones such as associates and followers. Charisma score dictated the number of loyal followers a PC might have, henchmen if you will. When adventuring with only one or two players' characters, having a body of loyal henchmen along meant a lot in regards successfully surviving difficult encounters.

In roleplaying, the Charisma score of the PC should affect reactions of those to whom he speaks, is dealing with. Force of personality can be a very potent tool in gaining what one desires, lack of it causing adverse reactions. PCs with low Charisma will be typically be treated derisively and shabbily by NPCs encountered.

In real life think of the popular and charming individual, someone who is the life of the party, a smooth talker, able to sell ice to Esquimos, both a man's man and a lady's man. Contrast that model to the loser who is laughed at, shunned, held in contempt, disliked...one with low Charisma, in fact.

I think that should cover it:)

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Monday, 26th January, 2004, 11:21 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **RFisher**

Gary,

*Let me add one more voice to the chorus thanking you for your seminal work upon which so much of our hobby is built. After managing to work my way through all five parts of this Q&A, I still managed to think of a question or two I didn't see answered.*

*(1) Regarding OAD&D (or, I suppose, OD&D + the Greyhawk supplement, though I never played that): Why exceptional strength? Aren't 18s uncommon enough? Why did Fighters need to subdivide the prime requisite thus, but other classes didn't? Why not continue to scores 19+ instead of subdividing 18?*

---

Thanks for the kind words.

Actually, an 18 score is one in 216, so not particularly rare in any large population. to make truly heroic strength more rare, I limited the percentage chance to fighters only, then stepped the linear curve so as to make the really great human strength rare.

As for 19s, they are beyond the normal range of human potential, Of course magic can enable such a score, but massive strength of human sort was, I felt, better reflected by the added d% roll.

Quote:

*(2) Any idea what Tom Moldvay is doing these days?*

---

Not a clue.

Quote:

*(3) I currently count myself among those who favor the Basic Set edited by Moldvay and the Expert Set edited by Cook (both released in 1981) over most other editions of D&D. Any recollections/opinions you may have about the development of those sets would be welcome.*

---

Frank Mentzer was the advocate I appointed for the D&D game product line. He was in creative charge of it, and the selection of designers to develop new editions of the game was in Frank's hands. If you wish more details, then he's the chap to ask.

Quote:

*I look forward to getting my group to try out the Lejendary Adventures Quickstart when the next chance between campaigns occurs. It looks like good fun. (Though, I think I differ with you decision to eschew standard RPG jargon. Having played & read numerous systems besides D&D, I personally find it more of an obstacle to comprehension than an aid to break from a D&D mindset.)*

TIA

---

Well i hope you have some fun playing the LA game adventure provided in the Quickstart file. After you have played come on back and tell me if the jargon change was helpful or not. Some considerable number of persons have told me that having to use those terms actually facilitated their grasp of the functional differences between the LA system and D&D/clone games. Of course once one has mastered the differences, reversion to old terminology is natural, and I find myself using D&D patois quite often when Lejend Mastering; my players understanding what I say in LA game terms;)

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Power\_Word\_Wedgie

Tuesday, 27th January, 2004, 12:04 AM

Gary,

I sorry if this question has already been asked, but I was wondering if you have been contacted for input into the 30th anniversary of D&D book planned in fall 2004. If so, do you know much you will be featured in the book. Just curious. Thanks.

P\_W\_W

---

Col\_Pladoh

Tuesday, 27th January, 2004, 02:24 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Power\_Word\_Wedgie***

*Gary,*

*I sorry if this question has already been asked, but I was wondering if you have been contacted for input into the 30th anniversary of D&D book planned in fall 2004. If so, do you know much you will be featured in the book. Just curious. Thanks.*

*P\_W\_W*

---

Howdy Power\_Word\_Wedgie:)

I was contacted about contributing to the book, but I passed. As it stands my writing schedule is booked through 2005. Besides, I've said about all I need to say in regards to the D&D game over the last 30 years...

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*Thanks for the kind words.*

*Actually, an 18 score is one in 216, so not particularly rare in any large population. to make truly heroic strength more rare, I limited the percentage chance to fighters only, then stepped the linear curve so as to make the really great human strength rare.*

*As for 19s, they are beyond the normal range of human potential, Of course magic can enable such a score, but massive strength of human sort was, I felt, better reflected by the added d% roll.*

---

Then why only for strength? Why set up an additional complication--special case for strength--instead of a simple, unified, and elegant design?

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Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Dogbrain***

*Then why only for strength? Why set up an additional complication--special case for strength--instead of a simple, unified, and elegant design?*

---

Adding a d% roll to an 18 Strength roll is hardly complicated. It was done because Strength was the only stat that needed to be increased in steps by the d% mechanic so as to improve fighters to hit and damage chances. So that was used because I favor interesting play over any imagined elegance, that being quite unlikely in an RPG in my view. RPGs are games, not art, and I don't give myself airs.

Can you imagine the increases of stats going into the 20s needed in order to get the same result as 18/00? The human norm bell curve of 3-18 down the tubes in a jiffy. Not elegant at all, and simply foolish;)

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*Howdy Power\_Word\_Wedgie:)*

*I was contacted about contributing to the book, but I passed. As it stands my writing schedule is booked through 2005. Besides, I've said about all I need to say in regards to the D&D game over the last 30 years...*

*Cheers,  
Gary*

---

Thanks for replying so quickly. I can appreciate the fact that over 30 years you have said your piece. (probably to the point of hearing the same question asked ad nauseum) However, do you have a recommendation as to a good source for reading the entire history of RPG and gaming - where the history, and your comments over the last 30 years, has been documented into a central source? Do you have an autobiography. My concern is that sometimes the history blurs as time goes by, and though it isn't like putting a man on the moon, it certainly is a historical event from the late 20th century. I remember seeing like an 8-page article on gaming posted on the internet about D&D a while back, with comments from both you and Arneson, but I was wondering if there is more. (Sorry in advance if this question has been asked previously)

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Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Power\_Word\_Wedgie***

*Thanks for replying so quickly. I can appreciate the fact that over 30 years you have said your piece. (probably to the point of hearing the same question asked ad nauseum) However, do you have a recommendation as to a good source for reading the entire history of RPG and gaming - where the history, and your comments over the last 30 years, has been documented into a central source? Do you have an autobiography. My concern is that sometimes the history blurs as time goes by, and though it isn't like putting a man on the moon, it certainly is a historical event from the late 20th century. I remember seeing like an 8-page article on gaming posted on the internet about D&D a while back, with comments from both you and Arneson, but I was wondering if there is more. (Sorry in advance if this question has been asked previously)*

---

Jon Pickens at WotC has done a very accurate history of the D&D game. I don't know if it's generally available or not, but I can vouch for it being on target through 1985.

There are dozens of Q&A sessions with me in the hot seat, but they are spread all over. Silven Crossroads does a short one every month in fact.

I have a very long bio done, but it isn't a real autobiography. That is a chore, and I have managed to write only a few score pages to date, those mainly dealing with my childhood years and family.

Your comments about memory growing fuzzy and inaccurate are well taken. Someone is working on a history of GenCon, and in speaking with him I discovered I had forgotten a lot about the early cons after number II. So I got Len Lakofka involved, and his memory was no better than mine, although he recalled the names of a couple of people who might have information that I had forgotten. Unusual events tend to linger in my memory, but the routine ones fade, and after the first few years GenCon became routine...

Cheers,  
Gary

---

## Whitey

Wednesday, 28th January, 2004, 06:36 AM

First of all, thanks so much for answering Whitey's earlier question - not only was this most kind of you, but it really illuminated some matters that have been raised in and that are key to our games.

Here's another matter, more a trivia question. Someone asked what the first ever monster in a dungeon was (going back to the preliminary phases of the game ages ago) and what its final fate was. If this has been asked earlier, finding the appropriate post and response would be a boon.

Again, many thanks.

All times are GMT +1. The time now is 03:44 PM.

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## Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 28th January, 2004, 12:30 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Whitey**

First of all, thanks so much for answering Whitey's earlier question - not only was this most kind of you, but it really illuminated some matters that have been raised in and that are key to our games.

Here's another matter, more a trivia question. Someone asked what the first ever monster in a dungeon was (going back to the preliminary phases of the game ages ago) and what its final fate was. If this has been asked earlier, finding the appropriate post and response would be a boon.

Again, many thanks.

My pleasure:)

The monsters first encountered, by son Ernie's and daughter Elise's characters, were a nest of scorpions in some rubble in the very first room of the dungeon they entered. The glint of coins was mentioned to lure the incautious hand into attack proximity, but Elise's PC used a dagger to poke around, and the scorpions were spotted. Eventually one managed to sting, but the poison saving throw was made. They next encountered and defeated a gang of kobolds with a chest of 3,000 copper pieces. Needless to say, they weren't pleased with the treasure.

Cheers,  
Gary

## Jehosephat

Wednesday, 28th January, 2004, 01:59 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

My pleasure:)

The monsters first encountered, by son Ernie's and daughter Elise's characters, were a nest of scorpions in some rubble in the very first room of the dungeon they entered. The glint of coins was mentioned to lure the incautious hand into attack proximity, but Elise's PC used a dagger to poke around, and the scorpions were spotted. Eventually one managed to sting, but the poison saving throw was made. They next encountered and defeated a gang of kobolds with a chest of 3,000 copper pieces. Needless to say, they weren't pleased with the treasure.

Cheers,  
Gary

Gary,

Greetings! This brings to mind something that I have often thought about. My favorite column to read in Dragon Magazine is "Up On a Soapbox". When I pick up a back issue that's the first thing I look for. I love reading the exploits of Tenser, Robilar, Yrag or whoever else you would be writing about in the given month. My question is this, is there ever a chance of some kind of Greyhawk diary or journal being released where you collect these kinds of tales. My guess is that you have 1000s of them that you could choose from. I for one would love to read that sort of thing. More so if it also contained some bits of campaign information that showed the early stages of Greyhawk and how and why it came together in the fashion that it did. I expect that there would be many others who would be interested in this sort of thing too.

Sincerely,  
Rob

## Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 28th January, 2004, 02:36 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Jehosephat**

Gary,

Greetings! This brings to mind something that I have often thought about. My favorite column to read in Dragon Magazine is "Up On a Soapbox". When I pick up a back issue that's the first thing I look for. I love reading the exploits of Tenser, Robilar, Yrag or whoever else you would be writing about in the given month. My question is this, is there ever a chance of some kind of Greyhawk diary or journal being released where you collect these kinds of tales. My guess is that you have 1000s of them that you could choose from. I for one would love to read that sort of thing. More so if it also contained some bits of campaign information that showed the early stages of Greyhawk and how and why it came together in the fashion that it did. I expect that there would be many others who would be interested in this sort of thing too.

Sincerely,

Rob

---

Hi Rob:)

Pleased to learn you enjoy those old tales of the early D&D adventures we had. After so long a time it isn't possible to say how many interesting events have been forgotten, but surely there were some. However, as with all campaigns, we had far more unremarkable sessions than interesting ones. I wish there were even scores more to tell, but my list of springboards for columns is down to a handfull or so.

Fortunately, Rob Kuntz has pitched in, written four accounts of adventures, and he assures me he has a fair number of additional ones. When all of my recollections are set down in print, and Rob's essays are completed, we plan to collect the lot and publish them in book form. That will be at least two years from now, The volume won't be large, but hopefully sufficiently so to make it worthwhile for readers.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Jehosephat

Wednesday, 28th January, 2004, 05:35 PM

Quote:

---

Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

Hi Rob:)

*Pleased to learn you enjoy those old tales of the early D&D adventures we had. After so long a time it isn't possible to say how many interesting events have been forgotten, but surely there were some. However, as with all campaigns, we had far more unremarkable sessions than interesting ones. I wish there were even scores more to tell, but my list of springboards for columns is down to a handfull or so.*

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Cheers,  
Gary

---

Gary,

thank you for the reply. I for one will be looking forward to that book. :D Right or wrong, those types of accounts are what seem to get my creative juices flowing and itching to play some D&D. :) In fact I am getting ready to launch a new Greyhawk campaign within the week.

Just this morning I was rereading the account of Robilar's planned excursion to the moon. I would have payed money to see the look on Rob Kuntz's face when Herb the Sage presented his giant catapult. Gosh, that just gets more comical each time I read it.

---

Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 28th January, 2004, 06:05 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Jehosephat**

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---

Herb thought it was a good idea at the time, rather as some SF writers on opur world thought that firing a space vessel from a giant cannon to reach the moon would be workable.

Rob took the whole thing quite calmly, all things considered, the huge outlay of gold pieces that Robilar had made. However, it soured him on Lunar exploration, which saddened me, because I was planning on having thre moon a place like "Hothouse World," with all manner of mutant plants and people on it, as well as some little sprite-like races dwelling around the verge of the vast central jungle.

Ain't magic grand?

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Jehosephat

Wednesday, 28th January, 2004, 06:29 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

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*Rob took the whole thing quite calmly, all things considered, the huge outlay of gold pieces that Robilar had made. However, it soured him on Lunar exploration, which saddened me, because I was planning on having thre moon a place like "Hothouse World," with all manner of mutant*

plants and people on it, as well as some little sprite-like races dwelling around the verge of the vast central jungle.

Ain't magic grand?

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Hi Gary,

thanks again for responding so speedily. I realize that in that particular article you mentioned that none dared try for the moon after that episode. Likewise, you mention that again here. However, and correct me if I am wrong, I seem to remember reading something somewhere about one of Ernie's characters having adventures on a world very similar to the John Carter of Mars series. Also, after years of looking through RPG products that bear your name, I get the distinct impression that you are a fan of having PCs explore alien type worlds; whether it be on another plane of existence (i.e. the EX series, the Demonweb Pits), another planet (like John Carter and the Mars series), or an alternante terran environment (such as Expedition to the Barrier Peaks; or perhaps another out of the norm location such as an undersea kingdom of sorts). Of course, I could be reading too much into your contributions to D&D. Like I say, though, I could swear that I have read that someplace about Ernie being a real fan of that series (ERB's John Carter of Mars) and ultimately adventuring in a similar setting.

Sincerely,  
Rob

---

Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 28th January, 2004, 07:27 PM

Rob,

Spot in in regards to having PCs adventure in different environments. I believe that keeps them, and the GM alike from growing complacent, or bored.

Ernie's PC read a curse scroll and got sent to Barsoon--ERB's Mars, of course. He managed the non-magical world very well, became the first character in the campaign to posses dual class status as a M-U and Fighter when the character discovered the means of returning ot Oerth.

In all of my campaigns, and in the modules I write, I try to give a variety of environments and situatiuons is that fits with the general setting and plot. the upcoming *Hall of Many Panes* is loaded with that sort of adventure material;)

Speaking of which, I need to get back to my final editing pass on the ms. Only about 200 pages of the 500+ therein left to read through...

Cheers,  
Gary

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RFisher

Wednesday, 28th January, 2004, 08:46 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by Col\_Pladoh*

*Pleased to learn you enjoy those old tales of the early D&D adventures we had. [...] That will be at least two years from now, The volume won't be large, but hopefully sufficiently so to make it worthwhile for readers.*

---

Two years! Argh! Those tales had really re-energized my desire to play (and DM), even though it wasn't really in need of re-energizing. I feel like those stories have given me some fresh and valuable insights into how to play the game, which seems to be awfully rare after 20 years of playing. Unfortunately, since I wasn't getting much else out of *Dragon*, I let my subscription lapse some time ago.

When you do get around to making a book of them, you should try to include some of the other tales of the early days that have already been told. Like Rob's telling of the Robilar & Mordie's experience in Arneson's *City of the Gods* in *Oerth Journal*.

Another couple of questions have come to mind (and I guess it goes without saying to please forgive me if they've been covered before):

Before I encountered D&D, the word "dungeon" meant to me merely an underground cell (or maybe a few cells). Was there precedent for using the word for a complex or were the dungeons under castles in the games merely turned into complexes for the sake of having someplace to explore?

If a new player in an OAD&D campaign says he wants a character like the Grey Mouser, would you just advise him to be a thief and accept that a PC can't easily combine the talents of the literary character? Would you suggest the dual class rules? Would you make up something special?

Personally, I've usually opted for the first route. While games and literature can inspire one another, they are vastly different things. I've had players, however, that bristle at the fact that the TSR Lankhmar products had to "break the rules" to accommodate those iconic characters.

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Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 28th January, 2004, 11:59 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by RFisher*

*Two years! Argh! Those tales had really re-energized my desire to play (and DM), even though it wasn't really in need of re-energizing. I feel like those stories have given me some fresh and valuable insights into how to play the game, which seems to be awfully rare after 20 years of playing. Unfortunately, since I wasn't getting much else out of Dragon, I let my subscription lapse some time ago.*

*When you do get around to making a book of them, you should try to include some of the other tales of the early days that have already been told. Like Rob's telling of the Robilar & Mordie's experience in Arneson's City of the Gods in Oerth Journal.*

---

I just sent in my 28th and 29th column essays regarding the old adventures in the Greyhawk Campaign. In checking my notes, I have only one more springboarded, but Rob is likely to have a fair store of tales to recount, so the zine should be supplied with material through this year at least. Perhaps I can come up with a few more tales of adventuring that I think are worth retelling.

If Rob owns the copyrights to the account of Robilar and Mordenkainen in "The City of the Gods" it would be a worthwhile addition to the contemplated book. So too the story of "Tenser and the Giant's Bag," which I have recounted elsewhere. That sort of material, as well as some possibly theretofore untold stories of Castle Greyhawk, will certainly be hashed over when the project is ready to go forward.

Quote:

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*Another couple of questions have come to mind (and I guess it goes without saying to please forgive me if they've been covered before):*

*Before I encountered D&D, the word "dungeon" meant to me merely an underground cell (or maybe a few cells). Was there precedent for using the word for a complex or were the dungeons under castles in the games merely turned into complexes for the sake of having someplace to explore?*

---

Underground mazes have been treated in mythology, fairy tales, and authored fiction (such as *A Journey to the Centre of the Earth*) long before this device was made a central feature in the D&D game. (My favorite one from fairy tales is the one about the 12 princesses who danced holes in their slippers every night.) Anyway, the expanded underground environment featuring dungeons was indeed meant for exploration, mapping, and as a place for strange encounters.

Quote:

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*If a new player in an OAD&D campaign says he wants a character like the Grey Mouser, would you just advise him to be a thief and accept that a PC can't easily combine the talents of the literary character? Would you suggest the dual class rules? Would you make up something special?*

*Personally, I've usually opted for the first route. While games and literature can inspire one another, they are vastly different things. I've had players, however, that bristle at the fact that the TSR Lankmar products had to "break the rules" to accommodate those iconic characters.*

---

I would advise the player to develop a thief character that was of his own creation, albeit it one that was modeled after a fictional hero. If the PC stats were good enough, I'd then point out that the character could begin play as a fighter, and then be switched to thief later on so as to have a dual class one akin to the Gray Mouser.

Unabashed plug: This difficulty highlights the drawback of a class based RPG. Because I was unsatisfied with having disappointed players, the LA game system's skill-bundle base allows for the creation of just about any kind of character the player (or GM) wants, and at the same time retains archetypes.

Cheerio,  
Gary

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Jehosephat

Thursday, 29th January, 2004, 12:24 AM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*Herb thought it was a good idea at the time, rather as some SF writers on our world thought that firing a space vessel from a giant cannon to reach the moon would be workable.*

*Rob took the whole thing quite calmly, all things considered, the huge outlay of gold pieces that Robilar had made. However, it soured him on Lunar exploration, which saddened me, because I was planning on having the moon a place like "Hothouse World," with all manner of mutant plants and people on it, as well as some little sprite-like races dwelling around the verge of the vast central jungle.*

*Ain't magic grand?*

*Cheers,  
Gary*

---

Hi Gary,

I've been thinking about this a bit and actually it's not that far fetched. I mean what is a rocket or missile after all but a really big bullet/shell? Oh there's still some problems with the physics, I'm sure, so I'll leave that to the scientists to work out. But the line of thought certainly has merit. Certainly Wells and Vern entertained such thoughts, they wrote about it after all. Incidentally H.G. Wells' first name was Herbert, perhaps Herb the Sage was a distant ancestor? :D

Now switching gears a bit before I close, I am interested in the Legendary Adventure rpg. I am having trouble finding the titles of the core books. Likewise, I can't seem to find a website for the company I could order them from. I followed a homepage link in your profile but somehow ended up on a German site of some sort. Can you steer me in the right direction? Thanks.

Sincerely,  
Rob

---

Gray Mouser

Thursday, 29th January, 2004, 02:39 AM

Gary,

I was just rereading "Mordenkainen's Fantastic Adventure" (kudos to Rob Kuntz and you on the published version of that dungeon, btw) and noticed that all of the NPC's in your original party are followers of Boccob and/or Zagyg. Yrag even being a worshipper of Zagyg alone! I'm wondering if in your home campaign this was, in fact, the case. Also, how widespread was the devotion to Boccob and Zagyg? Did either deity get involved in direct campaign play (besides Zagyg being the force behind Castle Greyhawk, I mean).



Thanks in advance.

Gray Mouser

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Gray Mouser

Thursday, 29th January, 2004, 02:43 AM

Gary,

I just thought of something. Any chance you could do a write up of Mordenkainen, et. al.'s adventures in Maure Castle for *Dragon*? I don't know if you've already done this as I'm not a subscriber and haven't read the magazine itself for many years (stopped after I couldn't take 2e any more :-).

Hey, I admit I'm just trying to get more material into the proposed future volume on adventuring high lights from Greyhawk!

Gray Mouser

---

Col\_Pladoh

Thursday, 29th January, 2004, 01:58 PM

Howdy Gray Mouser,

Mordenkainen being a mage was indeed a follower of Boccob, and thus generally honored Zagyg. The other magic-users in the group took also did the same. That meant that their cleric would be dedicated to Boccob, and the fighters and others, wanting the benefits of clerical ministrations came along for the ride;) Boccob was never an active deity in play, and none of the PCs was eager to have Zagyg intervene...

Rob's original dungeon levels were merged with mine to create the second Castle Greyhawk, but I have recorded some of my PCs adventures therein before that merger took place in pages of the *Dragon* Magazine column. While my characters adventured under a fair number of DMs, Rob was the one who refereed the majority of them. However, as the group became higher level, much of the action was outdoors.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Jehosephat

Thursday, 29th January, 2004, 02:27 PM

Greetings Colonel,

I had a quick question, about dice in those early games. I've never seen it mentioned anywhere, so I am wondering what did you do for polyhedra dice before TSR was making them (I presume you guys were the first). I read in an interview that you once fashioned a dragon out of a stegosaurus figure in the days before there were dragon miniatures. So I imagine you could have done something similar with dice. Or did you just use different combinations of the d6?

---

Col\_Pladoh

Thursday, 29th January, 2004, 02:54 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Jehosephat***

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---

Howdy, Jehosephat:)

Right you are about the stegosaurus converted to a red dragon--it came out pretty well. Other conversins were made from 90 mm Hauser Elastolin figures (giants), plastic dime store Indians (ogres), and various monster toys picked up in dime stores. Jack Scruby was making metal 30 mm orc figures, so we had plenty of those.

As to dice, though, actually, early in 1972 I got ahold of a school supply catalog from a company out in California. In that book were what I had been looking for for years--Platonic solids with numbers on them, polyhedral dice:) There was the pyramid d4 (yellow), the usual d6 with Arabic numerals (pine, later orange), a d8 (green), d 12 (light blue), and d20 (white) numbered 0-9 twice on its faces. All were made of soft plastic and the numbers were badly stamped, but what treasures! Just what was needed for interesting new games, thought I, but the set of five cost \$3.

When the D&D game was published, we bought 50 sets of these dice from school supply company, got a 10% discount, and passed them along to gamers at \$3.50 per set--a break even price--so as to make the D&D game easily playable. The school supply couldn't believe that we were ordering so many sets, and when we asked for discount rate on 1,000, they declined, so we found their source in the Orient and ordered direct from them.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Jehosephat

Thursday, 29th January, 2004, 03:22 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*Howdy, Jehosephat:)*

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Cheers,  
Gary

---

Thank you kindly Gary. I remember those dice from my early D&D and Gamma World boxed sets. Actually, for reasons of nostalgia, it wouldn't be bad to have a set of those right now. I remember the 4-siders actually had a pretty sharp point on them. You know if you attacked someone with them, I'll bet they would do 1d4 damage. :P (sorry I couldn't resist that corny joke).

---

Col\_Pladoh

Thursday, 29th January, 2004, 08:32 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Jehosephat**

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---

As it happens I have quite a number of the old low-impact dice around here somewhere. The points on the d4 were very sharp but wore down quickly. Rob had a d20 that would stand on a worn point about one roll in 50;)

Somewhere I lost my d20 with half the faces colored gray. It was my "killer die" that rolled an idnordinate number of 20s, and the players really hated it;)

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Grazzt

Thursday, 29th January, 2004, 08:42 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

Somewhere I lost my d20 with half the faces colored gray. It was my "killer die" that rolled an idnordinate number of 20s, and the players really hated it;)

Cheers,  
Gary

---

I have one of those myself (a "killer die"). Yeah- the players really, really hate it.

---

Col\_Pladoh

Thursday, 29th January, 2004, 08:49 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Grazzt**

I have one of those myself (a "killer die"). Yeah- the players really, really hate it.

---

Heh,

Right:) Rob was always looking to get one for himself to get even with me when he was DMing for my PCs. One encounter Robilar had when he was about 9th level and AC -4 was with an Evil Cleric and his gnomish guards. The latter managed to hit Robilar so many times because of my 20s that he had only about 10 HPs left when he finally offed the cleric and was able to concentrate on the gnomes.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

d20Dwarf

Thursday, 29th January, 2004, 08:53 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Grazzt**

*I have one of those myself (a "killer die"). Yeah- the players really, really hate it.*

---

Two weeks ago my dice, as a whole, were so hot, that at the end of the session my players smuggled them out of sight, divided them among their own dice bags, and then only revealed the ploy at the beginning of the next session. Needless to say, they had no trouble clearing the demon lord's Abyssal abode. :)

Col\_Pladoh

Thursday, 29th January, 2004, 10:07 PM

d20Dwarf,

It is good to learn that there is at least one other person who isn't superstitious about his dice being touched by others, particularly players from the group.

That said, I would be none too happy if my favorite ones were absconded with. I hate it when the opposition I am representing can't find the pointy ends of their swords, or use their natural weapons to effect. No challenge to the characters at all when that happens...and it does happen!

Cheers,  
Gary

grodog

Friday, 30th January, 2004, 10:43 PM

Quote:

*"Tenser and the Giant's Bag,"*

Hmmm, I'm not familiar with this story Gary. Do you recall where/when it appeared?

Also, Rob does own the copyright on the Oerth Journal accounts, although IIRC one of them has some comments from Dave Arneson that are his copyright as well. I'd be more than happy to forward you copies of them, if you'd like to consider them for possible additions to the collection.

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 31st January, 2004, 01:43 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **grodog***

*Hmmm, I'm not familiar with this story Gary. Do you recall where/when it appeared?*

Howdy Allen:)

No way i recall the dates or vehicles, but I wrote the account a couple of times. It was about an incident when Rob was DMing for Ernie who was on a solo adventure with Tenser, I was there working, but I gave Rob high signs and thus was playing the hill giant that Tenser met and conversed with. When we get to compiling the column material I'll do another account of the tale, and whatever new material i can recall.

Quote:

*Also, Rob does own the copyright on the Oerth Journal accounts, although IIRC one of them has some comments from Dave Arneson that are his copyright as well. I'd be more than happy to forward you copies of them, if you'd like to consider them for possible additions to the collection.*

Thanks for the information. Better the copies go to Rob than to me at this point. We have no written agreement yet. Rob can review the accounts and see about getting written permission for use of Dave's quotes or edit the material as he deems best:)

Cheers,  
Gary

Silver Moon

Saturday, 31st January, 2004, 02:02 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*...There was the pyramid d4 (yellow), the usual d6 with Arabic numerals (pine, later orange), a d8 (green), d 12 (light blue), and d20 (white) numbered 0-9 twice on its faces. All were made of soft plastic and the numbers were badly stamped, but what treasures!*

Treasures indeed! A week ago I had been doing some cleaning in our gaming room and accidentally misplaced the mug-full-of-dice that we put out on the table for everyone to game with. This brought things to a standstill at the beginning of the game until I remembered that there might be some in the back of a drawer inside the figure case. Wouldn't you know, it was the old chipped-up soft plastic bunch listed above that we had started out with. So some 23 years after we were first rolled them we were using them again!

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 31st January, 2004, 02:38 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Silver Moon**

*Treasures indeed! A week ago I had been doing some cleaning in our gaming room and accidentally misplaced the mug-full-of-dice that we put out on the table for everyone to game with. This brought things to a standstill at the beginning of the game until I remembered that there might be some in the back of a drawer inside the figure case. Wouldn't you know, it was the old chipped-up soft plastic bunch listed above that we had started out with. So some 23 years after we were first rolled them we were using them again!*

---

There's much to be said for results, and those old low-impact dice do generate random numbers;) Not much to look at but they deliver.

Of course I do prefer a d20 numbered 1-20, and in all the contemporary high-impact plastic dice are a boon, I have an odd mix of old and new, but my d30s and d7s get a fair workout in most game sessions,

Cheers,  
Gary

---

**talinthas**

Saturday, 31st January, 2004, 04:44 PM

here's another question for ya, Gary. Could you explain the concept behind Chromatic and Metallic Dragons?  
i mean, the evil dudes make sense, what with breath weapons that more or less match their color, but how did you decide on the five metallics, and why give them two BWs? and why brass, which is just an alloy of bronze and copper, instead of some other naturally occurring metal?

---

**Col\_Pladoh**

Saturday, 31st January, 2004, 05:16 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **talinthas**

*here's another question for ya, Gary. Could you explain the concept behind Chromatic and Metallic Dragons?  
i mean, the evil dudes make sense, what with breath weapons that more or less match their color, but how did you decide on the five metallics, and why give them two BWs? and why brass, which is just an alloy of bronze and copper, instead of some other naturally occurring metal?*

---

Originally there were the five "chromatic" and evil dragons, each with a color that suited their breath weapon, and a sixth good dragon patterned on the Oriental model of that imaginary creature. As it was both or different origination and alignment I decided to empower the gold dragon so as to more closely resemble the potent Oriental sort. So it got more of everything, including two breath weapons.

There came a time thereafter when more "metallic" dragons were desirable so as to expand the roster of good, Oriental-type ones. Thus all of them were modeled on the gold dragon template, had two breath weapons.

Logically, with metal value being used as the basis for potency, platinum (Bahamut) being the highest, then gold and silver, the sequence should have been platinum-gold-electrum-silver-copper-bronze. However, I thought bronze looked more potent than copper, and skipped then to brass--that metal conveying some not-so-benign connotations.

Somehow having good Oriental-model dragons relate to metals such as iridium, tin, and zinc, lead, or iron for that matter, just didn't cut it;)

Cheers,  
Gary

---

**Ed Cha**

Saturday, 31st January, 2004, 05:24 PM

Also, "brass dragon" just sounds better than "tin dragon". :)

Although that could be a good name for a fairy dragon-type creature. I could also see "iron dragon" as a sort of dragon golem.

---

**Col\_Pladoh**

Saturday, 31st January, 2004, 05:57 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Ed Cha**

*Also, "brass dragon" just sounds better than "tin dragon". :)*

*Although that could be a good name for a fairy dragon-type creature. I could also see "iron dragon" as a sort of dragon golem.*

---

Ciao Ed,

Speaking of incredible monsters, such as an iron dragon golem would likely be, I have heard from wild-eyes players about some absolutely off-the-wall monsters that include the diamond dragon, the steel toad, and the arch-lamassu. Perhaps I'll include their stats, as I recall them from hearing the account, in the compiled essays book of old D&D game adventure yards that Rob Kuntz and I plan to have published after we have run out of new stories to tell. Likely a slender book titled *Tales from Zagyg's Dungeon* or some such.

We were planning to add some additional yarns, material published elsewhere and some new accounts as well. Those incredible monsters would suit the overall humorous tone of the compilation.

Too bad I've lost my copy of the article in which I wrote up "The Ultimist" character class as an April Fools Day joke, or I'd put that into the collection for sure. If any reader happens to have a copy of that spoof, please sent it to me at: [ggygax@genevaonline.com](mailto:ggygax@genevaonline.com) The really funny part is that not a few young power gamers thought it was serious and wanted more details so they could create and play an Ultimist character :eek:

Gary

---

talinthas

Saturday, 31st January, 2004, 06:11 PM

heh. i'm betting that you can make some nice boots out of that steel toad =)

---

Silver Moon

Saturday, 31st January, 2004, 08:26 PM

Gary,

A quick question for you, why don't you have an avatar with your posts? I would think that an image from your Futurerama appearance would work perfectly.

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 31st January, 2004, 11:43 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **talinthas***

*heh. i'm betting that you can make some nice boots out of that steel toad =)*

---

It was created to be a PC killer for sure. Likely it would make boots out of most anything that it comes across.

There was a time when the power gamers spent a good deal of time and effort creating monsters to kill others of their ilk...

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 31st January, 2004, 11:46 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Silver Moon***

*Gary,*

*A quick question for you, why don't you have an avatar with your posts? I would think that an image from your Futurerama appearance would work perfectly.*

---

Ah, well, somewhere I think I have a screen grab of my animated likeness from the Futurama Show, but it's not all that important to me to have some [icture or symbol. Maybe one day, but..

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Flyspeck23

Saturday, 31st January, 2004, 11:55 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Silver Moon***

*Gary,*

*A quick question for you, why don't you have an avatar with your posts? I would think that an image from your Futurerama appearance would work perfectly.*

---

Here is my take on it:

<http://www.theothergamecompany.com/support/gary.gif>

So, no excuse - it's right there ;)

---

ScottGLXIX

Monday, 2nd February, 2004, 07:22 PM

Gary, I have a question about orc tribes in your campaign. Were the orcs encountered in the Greyhawk dungeon supposed to be part of one or more of the orc tribes listed in the original MM? As the published version of the Greyhawk setting was detailed the Vile Rune and Death Moon tribes were placed in the Bone March, and the Rotting Eye tribe was set in the Yatils, but I've always wondered about the orcs in and around the Greyhawk dungeons.

Scott

---

Col\_Pladoh

Monday, 2nd February, 2004, 11:03 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **ScottGLXIX***

*Gary, I have a question about orc tribes in your campaign. Were the orcs encountered in the Greyhawk dungeon supposed to be part of one or more of the orc tribes listed in the original MM? As the published version of the Greyhawk setting was detailed the Vile Rune and Death Moon tribes were placed in the Bone March, and the Rotting Eye tribe was set in the Yatils, but I've always wondered about the orcs in and around the Greyhawk dungeons.*

*Scott*

---

They orcs in the dungeon were of two separate tribes, but I have forgotten the names I gave them. As near as I can recollect, one was the Grinning Skull and the other was the Bloody Axe. they were all cut down or made into vassals by Robilar and Terik, with a good deal of assistance from Tenser.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

MerricB

Monday, 2nd February, 2004, 11:18 PM

G'day, Gary!

A couple of questions:

In *Unearthed Arcana*, the demi-human level limits were revised, allowing higher levels for exceptional stats and the like. I was wondering if that was one of your contributions to the book or if it was done by someone else?

Did you enjoy the third of the Lord of the Rings films?

I'm getting all impatient now for the release of the *Hall of Many Panes*... I'm very much looking forward to it.

Cheers and (belated) best wishes for the New Year!

---

Gray Mouser

Tuesday, 3rd February, 2004, 02:31 AM

Hi Gary,

I was recently rereading your old Gord the Rogue short story in *DRagon* #100, "At Moonset Blackcat Comes." In the story you have Gord and Rexfelis playing "Dragon Chess" and there are rules for the game directly following the story. I'm wondering if you actually played the game to any extent (I imagine you'd have to have played it a little in order to actually right up the rules!). Was it an enjoyable game? I always thought about constructing a 3-level board and giving it a go but never got around to it (a shame, that).

I myself enjoy the occasional game of chess, but don't get to play much any more. Some of my fondest memories are playing a friend of mine to several stalemates in a row (he would go to chess tournaments on occasion so I viewed this as an accomplishment - besides, he HATED that he couldn't beat me! ;-).

Thanks,

Gray Mouser

---

Dogbrain

Tuesday, 3rd February, 2004, 02:49 AM

I was thumbing through my base Greyhawk material (the original--the folio folder) and started to wonder: Whatever happened to "long ago and far away" as the basic tone of roleplaying setting publications? That was something that I liked about the older Greyhawk stuff. All the "official" material was presented as a history of a very distant past. I like that.

These days, nearly everything has this "here and now and here are all the details in excruciating detail" approach. I liked the more "incomplete because it's distant history" approach.

---

Dogbrain

Tuesday, 3rd February, 2004, 02:52 AM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Gray Mouser***

*Hi Gary,*

*I was recently rereading your old Gord the Rogue short story in DRagon #100, "At Moonset Blackcat Comes." In the story you have Gord and Rexfelis playing "Dragon Chess" and there are rules for the game directly following the story. I'm wondering if you actually played the game to any extent (I imagine you'd have to have played it a little in order to actually right up the rules!). Was it an enjoyable game?*

---

Yes, it is, speaking as someone who has played it.

<http://www.chessvariants.com/3d.dir/dragonchess.html> just in case folks weren't aware of this site.

Show 20 post(s) from this thread on one page

Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 4th February, 2004, 12:40 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **MerricB****G'day, Gary!**A couple of questions:**In Unearthed Arcana, the demi-human level limits were revised, allowing higher levels for exceptional stats and the like. I was wondering if that was one of your contributions to the book or if it was done by someone else?*

Almost all of the material in the UA book was mine, picked up from articles I wrote in *Dragon* magazine. As to the increase in types of demi-humans and their level limits, yes. That was of my doing. As human PCs were getting to higher levels then it seemed a good idea to allow for more potent non-human characters, while at the same time maintaining the human race as predominant.

Quote:

*Did you enjoy the third of the Lord of the Rings films?*

Sadly for me I have not been feeling well all winter thanks to the flu, so I have yet to see the film. Looks as if I am going to have to wait for the release of RotK on DVD.

Quote:

*I'm getting all impatient now for the release of the Hall of Many Panes... I'm very much looking forward to it.**Cheers and (belated) best wishes for the New Year!*

You and me both! It now seems likely that the HOMP will not be released until near the end of the year. I just finished my editorial check of the 500 + pp. ms. and sent the file back to the Trolls. Layout and interior maps art acquisition are now ready to progress.

Ciao,  
Gary

Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 4th February, 2004, 12:47 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Gray Mouser****Hi Gary,**I was recently rereading your old Gord the Rogue short story in DDragon #100, "At Moonset Blackcat Comes." In the story you have Gord and Rexfelis playing "Dragon Chess" and there are rules for the game directly following the story. I'm wondering if you actually played the game to any extent (I imagine you'd have to have played it a little in order to actually right up the rules!). Was it an enjoyable game? I always thought about constructing a 3-level board and giving it a go but never got around to it (a shame, that).**I myself enjoy the occasional game of chess, but don't get to play much any more. Some of my fondest memories are playing a friend of mine to several stalemates in a row (he would go to chess tournaments on occasion so I viewed this as an accomplishment - besides, he HATED that he couldn't beat me! ;-).**Thanks,**Gray Mouser*

Howdy Gray Mouser!

Yes, I played the Dragon Chess game--by myself. It came out quite well despite that, and it is a recognized variant on the <http://www.chessvariants.com/> website. Go there and have a look. Some of the fellows there have made a few suggested changes;

I too love chess games, seldom have opportunity to play. Amongst my favorites are shogi, double chess, and a revised courier game where there is on the king's side of the board a piece combining the powers of the K and N, so as to have a real attack threat there.

Cheers,  
Gary



Quote:

---

Originally Posted by **Dogbrain**

*I was thumbing through my base Greyhawk material (the original--the folio folder) and started to wonder: Whatever happened to "long ago and far away" as the basic tone of roleplaying setting publications? That was something that I liked about the older Greyhawk stuff. All the "official" material was presented as a history of a very distant past. I like that.*

*These days, nearly everything has this "here and now and here are all the details in excruciating detail" approach. I liked the more "incomplete because it's distant history" approach.*

---

Hello Dogbrain:)

You are preaching to the choir in regards to keeping quantification to the bare minimum needed to present an interesting and exciting experience. My reason is because I think that approach allows and encourages participant imagination and creative addition, those exercises making the material more personal to the participating group. That said, sometimes the "bare minimum" is rather highly detailed.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

## Calico\_Jack73

Wednesday, 4th February, 2004, 02:52 PM

Quote:

---

Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

*Somehow having good Oriental-model dragons relate to metals such as irridium, tin, and zinc, lead, or iron for that matter, just didn't cut it;*

*Cheers,*  
*Gary*

---

Hmmmm... Now you've got me thinking about making up some other dragons using other elements from the Periodic Table.

Einsteinium = Incredibly wise dragon with wild white fur all over it. Breath Weapon is a cloud of carcinogenic gas smelling of pipe weed.

Uranium = Everywhere this incredibly dumb (dense) dragon goes people begin losing their hair and falling fatally sick. Breath weapon would be an incredibly intense burst of light and heat that disintegrates adventurers and burns their shadow into whatever substance is behind them.

Sorry Gary, I just couldn't resist!

---

## Calico\_Jack73

Wednesday, 4th February, 2004, 03:06 PM

Quote:

---

Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

*The Cavalier class was aimed at depicting a knightly warrior of most able sort...and they were very tough indeed.*

---

It is interesting that you said that. I've seen several discussions where people consider the Paladin class "Unplayable" because of the restrictions of code and alignment. The most common belief is that the Paladin is supposed to represent the "Knightly Ideal" but I never bought into that because that was the role of the Cavalier. I believe most people came to that conclusion because of the "Paladin in Hell" picture in the 1E PHB. My view is that the Paladin is a divine champion. A Paladin could have been some farmboy that a diety chose as his champion due to the farmboy's purity of heart. In that case the farmboy paladin wouldn't have been raised to follow the knight's code but would follow his own moral code of right and wrong. One of the biggest arguements is that Paladins can't lie as that would violate his code. However, if a Paladin can champion the cause of good and defeat evil through a lie I think it would be unreasonable to think that the Paladin wouldn't take that opportunity. I'd like your view on the Paladin class and the features that make is supposedly "Unplayable".

Thank you so much for your input Gary.

---

## Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 4th February, 2004, 03:47 PM

Quote:

---

Originally Posted by **Calico\_Jack73**

*Hmmmm... Now you've got me thinking about making up some other dragons using other elements from the Periodic Table.*

*[snip]*

*Sorry Gary, I just couldn't resist!*

---

As for metallic dragons, wouldn't a Chromium Dragon be flashy? The real shifty and heavy-weight one would be the Mercury Dragon, of course :cool:

Actually, there are some serious chromatic hybrids covered in the *Slayer's Guide to Dragons* book from Mongoose...although some folks might find a pink (red-white cross) dragon somewhat hard to take seriously:)

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Wednesday, 4th February, 2004, 04:00 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Calico\_Jack73***

*... I'd like your view on the Paladin class and the features that make is supposedly "Unplayable".*

*Thank you so much for your input Gary.*

---

First, many a Paladin PC has been played, and that done successfully generally following the rules for the class as written.

Lawful Good does not equate to stupid or foolish, It means the PC must follow the Law as determined by the deity the Paladin acknowledges, and thus promote Good according to that Law.

As I have pointed out at times, a Paladin might well execute a group of captives after they have converted from their former (Evil) alignment to Lawful Good, for that act saves their sould, prevents them from slipping back into error.

A Paladin will not normally sacrifice himself, fight needlessly, unless it is a situation where honor and duty demand that. Such sacrifice would have to be demonstrably for the betterment of his deity, or else based on anoath the character made prior to the dire situation.

While in general a Paladin can not lie, that does not mean he must say anything, or can not answer evasively or mislead--if that is according to the tenents of his avowed LG deity.

A Paladin played by someone that doen not understand the basis of the Code of Chivalry taken to the extreme and attached to religion is likely unplayable, but that's the fault of the player, not the class.

Yes, I have played a Paladin character, but not for long, as I don't enjoy Lwaful Good characters much--too restrictive for a Chaotic sort of person such as I am :D

Cheers,  
Gary

---

blackshirt5

Wednesday, 4th February, 2004, 04:05 PM

Mr Gygax,

Why do you think it is that gamers have gotten such a bad rep in the general media as stalkers and freaks?

---

Joe123

Thursday, 5th February, 2004, 12:28 PM

Gary,

You said here once before that you believe people who play D&D have above-average intelligence. I'm wondering, what makes you say this?

---

Col\_Pladoh

Thursday, 5th February, 2004, 01:31 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **blackshirt5***

*Mr Gygax,*

*Why do you think it is that gamers have gotten such a bad rep in the general media as stalkers and freaks?*

---

News media seeks the sensational in order to attract viewers, sell air-time ads, make money. Initial publicity for the D&D game, that pre-1981, was not broad, but several newspapers of good reputre, such as the St. Louis *Post Dispatch* wrote articles about the game that were informative and positive.

The James Dallas Egbert III case was the turning point. Thanks to the publicity-seeking DI brought in, and the following ill-informed news media coverage--sensationalist to the extreme--there was a barrage of inaccurate stories and further biased charges of baseless sort. These in toto brought forth suicide, Satanism, and mind-control as supposed dangers of the game. Add to that the difficulty of the ignorant in understanding the RPG form, and what can one expect? Certainly the mass of people are not motivated to put forth any effort to discover the truth. Coupled with the nature of the people playing RPGs--generally above-average intelligence, given to imaginative literature, creative and non-conformist, interested in technology such as computers, and often not concerned with social "norms"--that making for an easy target for cheap shots from "reporters" (you know, that group of intellectual giants who talk about "honing in" on something, and "ratchet up" rather than raise; the group that doesn't know that "enormity" isn't synonomus with wonderful or considerabe and think "momentarily" means in a moment)--expressions of ignorance can be expected to come from the news media,

Again, given all that, what can one expect from the general populace? Certainly not an informed and reasonable view of the RPG!

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Thursday, 5th February, 2004, 01:40 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Joe123***

Gary,

*You said here once before that you believe people who play D&D have above-average intelligence. I'm wondering, what makes you say this?*

---

Heh!

The fact that the entry bar to playing RPGs is above average intelligence. Consider the amount of reading necessary, the reasoning called for in understanding the game and the play of it. If one begins with an audience whose intellect is necessarily above average, the norm for the participant group will be higher than average.

RPG enthusiasts actually read, often broadly. It is also apparent that the creative level of the RPG audience is well above the average. demonstrable from the output of writing and game creation coming from it.

Finally, most gamers are college graduates, or going to college and will graduate. Most are highly literate in regards to computers too;)

Cheers,  
Gary

---

**RFisher**

Thursday, 5th February, 2004, 09:12 PM

Gary,

Yet another question. (Haven't you got tired of this yet. :) )

What are your thoughts on ability score checks in OD&D or OAD&D? Calling for a roll  $\leq$  to an ability score on 1d20 or 3d6 or whatever. (Possibly with modifiers based on difficulty.) Or 3e style: Roll 1d20 + ability score modifier  $\geq$  difficulty class.

(There's a thread over on Dragonsfoot in which nobody has been able to find an occurrence of such a thing in anything you wrote, and at least one person guesses that you thought they are a bad thing.)

---

**Col\_Pladoh**

Thursday, 5th February, 2004, 10:34 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **RFisher***

Gary,

*Yet another question. (Haven't you got tired of this yet. :) )*

*What are your thoughts on ability score checks in OD&D or OAD&D? Calling for a roll  $\leq$  to an ability score on 1d20 or 3d6 or whatever. (Possibly with modifiers based on difficulty.) Or 3e style: Roll 1d20 + ability score modifier  $\geq$  difficulty class.*

*(There's a thread over on Dragonsfoot in which nobody has been able to find an occurrence of such a thing in anything you wrote, and at least one person guesses that you thought they are a bad thing.)*

---

Anyone familiar with my latest RPG, the *Legendary Adventure* system will know the answer to this immediately. Ability checks are fine, assuming the likelihood of success or failure in the game environment is approximately the same as one would expect in actuality.

As for their use in my A/D&D material, the Thief and Assassin classes used them all the time. Strength was tested thus too, as in opening doors, bending bars, lifting gates.

Mainly, though, rolling to hit is a test of combat ability, right?

Random chance is a very important factor in the RPG, so using logical checks made with dice conforms to that element of the game form.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

**T. Foster**

Thursday, 5th February, 2004, 11:23 PM

Hi Gary,

I've seen you around some of the old-school-friendly sites I more commonly frequent (Dragonsfoot, Rob Kuntz's board), but this is my first contribution here:

In stories of the Greyhawk Campaign (which I *love* reading, btw), the featured characters are almost exclusively human fighters and magic-users (with occasional clerics, but mostly as henchmen/support-types). Examples include Robilar, Tenser, Terik, Yrag, Mordenkainen, Murlynd, Erac and Erac's Cousin, Otto, Bigby, Gronan of Simmerya, Bombadil, and on and on. Characters of other classes are much less frequently mentioned, and when they are it's usually as an oddity or token (i.e. Terry Kuntz's "Monk with No Name"). This seems surprising to me because in every D&D campaign I've ever played in thieves (especially demi-human multi-classed thieves) and rangers at least have been just as popular as firs and m-u's. Were such character-types really not popular in Greyhawk, or is it simply that the best and most memorable stories tend to come from the 'early days' before those character types had been developed, and that in Greyhawk's later years (c. 1975+) they were common after all?

Best,

T. Foster

P.S. I played with you in "Necropolis" at Glathricon (in Evansville, IN) in 1988 and am pretty sure I encountered your infamous 'killer' d20 -- it was white, numbered 0-9 twice, and rolled awfully well (for you, badly for us :( ).

P.P.S. FWIW I'm actually the "one person" mentioned in RFisher's question above who guessed you didn't approve of the universal "roll stat or less on 1d20" stat-check mechanic (since AFAICT that method never appeared in any of your AD&D writing). I didn't mean to suggest that you didn't approve of stat-based rolls *at all* (the str-based bend bars and open doors rolls certainly prove that's not the case!), merely that I suspected you hadn't much use for the 'one size fits all' universal stat-or-less-on-1d20 mechanic that became much more prevalent once you were no longer at the helm (in the Dragonlance modules and Survival Guides, and eventually in the core 2E rulebooks). My guess is that you preferred a more ad-hoc approach where odds were formulated on the spot based on the specific circumstances of the situation. So, did I guess right? :D

---

Col\_Pladoh

Thursday, 5th February, 2004, 11:56 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **T. Foster***

*Hi Gary,*

*I've seen you around some of the old-school-friendly sites I more commonly frequent (Dragonsfoot, Rob Kuntz's board), but this is my first contribution here:*

---

Howdy Amigo:)

That reminds me, I need to visit Dragonsfoot and the two main LA game websites tomorrow!

Quote:

---

*In stories of the Greyhawk Campaign (which I love reading, btw), the featured characters are almost exclusively human fighters and magic-users (with occasional clerics, but mostly as henchmen/support-types). Examples include Robilar, Tenser, Terik, Yrag, Mordenkainen, Murlynd, Erac and Erac's Cousin, Otto, Bigby, Gronan of Simmerya, Bombadil, and on and on. Characters of other classes are much less frequently mentioned, and when they are it's usually as an oddity or token (i.e. Terry Kuntz's "Monk with No Name"). The seems surprising to me because in every D&D campaign I've ever played in thieves (especially demi-human multi-classed thieves) and rangers at least have been just as popular as ftrs and m-u's. Were such character-types really not popular in Greyhawk, or is it simply that the best and most memorable stories tend to come from the 'early days' before those character types had been developed, and that in Greyhawk's later years (c. 1975+) they were common after all?*

---

There were in fact numbers of hobbits/halflings, dwarves, elves, a few half-elves, at least one half-orc, Joe Fischer's Ranger, Tim Kask's high-level Druid, Don Arndt's Paladin, and Mark Ratner's too, etc. I even played a half-orc Cleric/Assassin charavter for a short time in a campaign run by Brian Blume. That said, the most interesting adventures seemed to come from the group you mention, mainly becuse=use they were the PCs of the most active members of the early group. After they became a classin 1975, relatively few thieves were played because of their guaranteed short life span if caught stealing from a party with a major PC in it.

That cover it?

Quote:

---

*P.S. I played with you in "Necropolis" at Glathricon (in Evansville, IN) in 1988 and am pretty sure I encountered your infamous 'killer' d20 -- it was white, numbered 0-9 twice, and rolled awfully well (for you, badly for us :( ).*

---

Heh, and pleased to learn that. It was either my gray or red "killer die," undoubtedly. It has since sent a large number of adventurers to their doom when rolled on behalf of my OD&D game "Old Guard Kobolds." The ninth party of six or more 2nd level characters fell to them at JanCon last month.

Lest some reader think I always seek to kill PCs, rest assured that it is only at cons, and mainly to prove the point that running away is often a good idea. A second group playing in the original AOD&D dungeons bypassed the kobolds, went down to the third level, slew many a monster in the process, and didn't lost a single member;)

Quote:

---

*P.P.S. FWIW I'm actually the "one person" mentioned in RFisher's question above who guessed you didn't approve of the universal "roll stat or less on 1d20" stat-check mechanic (since AFAICT that method never appeared in any of your AD&D writing). I didn't mean to suggest that you didn't approve of stat-based rolls at all (the str-based bend bars and open doors rolls certainly prove that's not the case!), merely that I suspected you hadn't much use for the 'one size fits all' universal stat-or-less-on-1d20 mechanic that became much more prevalent once you were no longer at the helm (in the Dragonlance modules and Survival Guides, and eventually in the core 2nd edition rulebooks).*

---

That I don't believe that one size fits all in regards to ability checks is certainly true. That's why I prefaced my earlier post of approval of the concept as I did. The various checks for thieving abilities and assassination are also examples of how I view the concept.

Early in the developmental stage of OD&D I allowed non-mages to use wands, needing to roll their Intelligence or less on 3d6 to make the device function. I dropped the concept as being incoingruous with the class-base of the game.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Bloodstone Press

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 01:56 AM

Hi Gary!

I was just reading your post in the "where did trolls come from" thread. I was wondering the same thing about hobgoblins. I plan to use them in an upcoming work, and I was researching them. I've read about Robin Goodfellow, but that made me wonder where the idea of them being militaristic came from (Robin isn't much of a soldier, he's more of a prankster, as I'm sure you know... ho, ho, ho!). :D

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acro...98/roxbur.html>

---

**talinthas**

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 02:00 AM

dumb question time, gary. How do you pronounce your last name?

---

**Bloodstone Press**

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 02:35 AM

That's not a dumb question. I've been in vociferous arguments with people who insisted his name is pronounced "Guy-Jax," and even "Jy-Jax." I continue to maintain it is "Guy-gax."

Guess we'll finally find out for sure any minute... (anxiously holding my breath...)

---

**Col\_Pladoh**

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 01:22 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Bloodstone Press***

*Hi Gary!*

*I was just reading your post in the "where did trolls come from" thread. I was wondering the same thing about hobgoblins. I plan to use them in an upcoming work, and I was researching them. I've read about Robin Goodfellow, but that made me wonder where the idea of them being militaristic came from (Robin isn't much of a soldier, he's more of a prankster, as I'm sure you know... ho, ho, ho!). :D*

*<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acro...98/roxbur.html>*

---

Salut!

After noting your sig, I have to say that as a 12-year-old "John Bloodstone" stories in pulp zines were very thrilling to me....

I took a good deal of literary license in creating monsters for the D&D game. As I needed a humanoid tougher than a goblin but not as powerful as a gnoll, I simply used "hobgoblin",,,even though its name indicated a smaller sort of goblin. In short, only the name was drawn from folklore, and the rest was made up out of whole cloth;)

Cheers,  
Gary

P.S. I forgot to say, as to Robin Goodfellow, Puck it! (And, BTW, we had a Joe Goodfellow in my old D&D group, but he wasn't in the least Puckish...)

---

**Col\_Pladoh**

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 01:30 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **talinthas***

*dumb question time, gary. How do you pronounce your last name?*

---

Heh, and my branch of the family has dumbly Amaricanized it to sound like "Guy-gax." The proper Swiss pronunciation sounds like "GEE-gox." When I am around landmen I introduce myself as a "GEE-gox." :o As a matter of fact, some of the family have changed the spelling to "Gigax" or "Gegax" on hopes of having it pronounced as it is in Switzerland.

Years ago when I was visiting a Swiss community here in Wisconsin, New Glarus, an old fellow asked me my surname. When I told him it was "Gee-gox," he smiled and said, "Ach, a Berner, ja."

My father was indeed born in Seeberg in Canton Bern. I've been to Switzerland twice, but sadly never got to the family's home canton, just to Zurich and Basil.

Cheers,  
Gary

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Col\_Pladoh

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 01:36 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Bloodstone Press****That's not a dumb question. I've been in vociferous arguments with people who insisted his name is pronounced "Guy-Jax," and even "Jy-Jax." I continue to maintain it is "Guy-gax."**Guess we'll finally find out for sure any minute... (anxiously holding my breath...)*

LOL!

There's a standing joke amongst my sons and gaming fellows about those who claim, "Jerry Jyjax is a good friend of mine."

Still chuckling,  
Gary

RFisher

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 04:15 PM

If I misrepresented your opinion, T.Foster, I apologize. In any case, I could probably have phrased things better. Thief skills and open doors--while not wholly unrelated--don't really qualify as ability checks to me.

Thief skills: Look up base chance on a table by level. Look up modifier on a table by ability score.

Open doors/bend bars/lift gates: Look up chance on a table by ability score.

Ability check: Roll ability score or less on 1d20. (Or roll ability score -4 or less on 1d20. Or roll ability score less on 3d6. Or roll ability score or less on 4d6.)

Now, possibly the tables can be replaced by a calculation. And certainly, the table lookup or calculation can be preformed once and kept on the character record.

But ability checks--and now I realize the distinction to be made--are typically used for winging it. You don't have time to develop a table or calculation and--even if you did--you don't want to take time to use it.

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh****That I don't believe that one size fits all in regards to ability checks is certainly true. That's why I prefaced my earlier post of approval of the concept as I did. The various checks for thieving abilities and assassination are also examples of how I view the concept.*

One thing that has struck me recently: These days there seems to be a strong feeling that RPGs need a "universal mechanic". A common criticism of OAD&D is that it lacked such. Reading OAD&D & classic Traveller these days, however, it seems to me that they *did* have a universal mechanic--which as a youngster I missed--though it may not be explicit.

For OAD&D I'd say it was: Figure out what you think the odds are and pick a die roll/target number with those odds.

(Look at the dwarf abilities in the PHB. Gary isn't concerned with what dice you roll, although he gives you suggestions. He's merely concerned about communicating the odds.)

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh****Early in the developmental stage of OD&D I allowed non-mages to use wands, needing to roll their Intelligence or less on 3d6 to make the device function. I dropped the concept as being incongruous with the class-base of the game.*

Interesting.

I guess what I really want to know from Gary is: When winging it while DMing, do you use this sort of direct ability check? Do you use it often? Is there any basic mechanic you fall back on, or do you just guesstimate the odds (informed by the character's ability scores, class, level, & situation) and pick a dice roll & target number to match?

How about in the LA system: Do you usually have players roll directly against their abilities or do you figure the odds informed by their abilities?

S'mon

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 04:30 PM

Quote:

---

Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

Salut!

After noting your sig, I have to say that as a 12-year-old "John Bloodstone" stories in pulp zines were very thrilling to me....

I took a good deal of literary license in creating monsters for the D&D game. As I needed a humanoid tougher than a goblin but not as powerful as a gnoll, I simply used "hobgoblin",,,even though its name indicated a smaller sort of goblin. In short, only the name was drawn from folklore, and the rest was made up out of whole cloth;)

---

& incidentally the big orcs in JRRT's The Hobbit are referred to as 'hobgoblins' (what are called Uruk Hai in LOTR), whereas the small orcs are called 'goblins' (LOTR's snagga orcs). Coincidence? :D

---

Col\_Pladoh

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 05:54 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **RFisher**

Ability check: Roll ability score or less on 1d20. (Or roll ability score -4 or less on 1d20. Or roll ability score less on 3d6. Or roll ability score or less on 4d6.)

---

That is system specific, and not applicable to all FRPGs.

Quote:

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[snip]

I guess what I really want to know from Gary is: When winging it while DMing, do you use this sort of direct ability check? Do you use it often? Is there any basic mechanic you fall back on, or do you just guesstimate the odds (informed by the character's ability scores, class, level, & situation) and pick a dice roll & target number to match?

---

I use what seems logical for the situation, more or less as you set forth, and then have the player roll for the PC, or do it in secret of it's something that should not be known.

Quote:

---

How about in the LA system: Do you usually have players roll directly against their abilities or do you figure the odds informed by their abilities?

---

Heh, as it happens, skill-bundles in the LA game are called "Abilities," have a %score for successful use--with various modifiers; so yes, players roll against the applicable Ability score, or perhaps one of their three Base Rating scores. I calculate the modifiers applicable, if any, and pass on the resulting outcome. Usually, though, the player has to make it clear that the character is actually using an Ability for it to function. Normal senses being a partial exception. One might see, hear, or smell something even when not concentrating, so in such cases there is either no bonus for the check or even a penalty.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 06:00 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **S'mon**

& incidentally the big orcs in JRRT's The Hobbit are referred to as 'hobgoblins' (what are called Uruk Hai in LOTR), whereas the small orcs are called 'goblins' (LOTR's snagga orcs). Coincidence? :D

---

Ho S'mon:)

I didn't know, or at least don't recall, JRRT using the term "hobgoblin" in his novels.

If he too called larger goblins "hobgoblins," I am quite surprised, as the "hob" prefix in folklore indicates a smaller version of something.

As I stated, I needed a name for a mumanoid larger than a goblin, that race having been detailed already, so I bit the bullet and used the name for a smaller version of a goblin for a larger humanoid race in AD&D. If Tolkien did the same for whatever reasons he had, then it is coincidence.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

S'mon

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 06:43 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

Ho S'mon:)



*I didn't know, or at least don't recall, JRRT using the term "hobgoblin" in his novels.*

*If he too called larger goblins "hobgoblins," I am quite surprised, as the "hob" prefix in folklore indicates a smaller version of something.*

*As I stated, I needed a name for a humanoid larger than a goblin, that race having been detailed already, so I bit the bullet and used the name for a smaller version of a goblin for a larger humanoid race in AD&D. If Tolkien did the same for whatever reasons he had, then it is coincidence.*

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Hi Gary - sorry to be sceptical, but are you sure you didn't read *The Hobbit* and just don't remember? AIR hobgoblins are only mentioned in the Battle of Five Armies section, as forming the Goblin King's bodyguard. It might have been an unconscious thing, but I do very much get the impression that D&D's goblins & hobgoblins are based off the ones in *The Hobbit*, and D&D's orcs are based off orcs in *Lord of the Rings* (rather than Celtic mythology, say), so in essence all 3 are the same monster. Likewise D&D's dwarves' attributes seem more directly akin to Tolkien's dwarves than most mythological representations, and D&D elves likewise. And halflings, of course (although Tolkien didn't invent 'hobbit', despite what his estate claims).

Of the D&D Player-Character races, half-orcs are perhaps the least Tolkienesque in that the ones hinted at in LOTR seem to be sly, sneaky infiltrators rather than big dumb lunks, although I think he does have it that the big Uruk Hai/hobgoblins are the result of orc-human crossbreeding.

---

## Gray Mouser

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 08:09 PM

Gary,

I have a question that has long puzzled me. It's about PC's acquiring Magic-User spells. IN the DMG (p. 39) it states:

"Naturally, magic-user player characters will do their utmost to acquire books of spells and scrolls in order to complete their own spell books. To those acquired, the magic-user will add 1 (and ONLY 1) spell when he or she actually gains an experience level (q.v.). Therefore, most will be frantically attempting to purchase or cozen spells from non-player character magic-users, or even from other player character magic-users."

OK, here's my question. When you say: "To those acquired, the magic-user will add 1 (and ONLY 1) spell when he or she actually gains an experience level." do you mean that the PC mage AUTOMATICALLY gains a new spell in their spell book whenever the rise in levels? For example, if my M-U is going from 1st to 2nd level do I get to add a brand new spell to my spell book even if I did NOT find a scroll or spell book in the dungeon I just explored?

If this is, in fact, the case then how should you handle it when a M-U goes up levels and gets the ability to cast a spell of a new level AND gains the ability to cast more spells in a level in which he's already proficient? For example, my M-U goes from 6th level to 7th level and is now able to cast 4th level spells AND gains an additional 2nd level spell.

Sorry for asking such an involved question, but you have no idea how long I've tried to figure this one out! BUT since I found this site I figured I may as well go straight to the horse's mouth (so to speak).

Thanks in advance!

Gray Mouser

---

## Col Pladoh

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 09:15 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by S'mon*

*Hi Gary - sorry to be sceptical, but are you sure you didn't read The Hobbit and just don't remember? AIR hobgoblins are only mentioned in the Battle of Five Armies section, as forming the Goblin King's bodyguard.*

---

As a matter of fact I don't recall reading nything about hobgoblins in *The Hobbit*, or I'd have said so. As i have mentioned twice not, "hob" is a prefix indicating small or little, and disliked using it for the fourth in the humanoid races I was ranking--kobolds, goblins, orcs, hobgoblins, gnolls, bugbears, ogres, trolls, giants--but goblin state had been established before I set about that hierarchy.

Quote:

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*It might have been an unconscious thing, but I do very much get the impression that D&D's goblins & hobgoblins are based off the ones in The Hobbit, and D&D's orcs are based off orcs in Lord of the Rings (rather than Celtic mythology, say), so in essence all 3 are the same monster. Likewise D&D's dwarves' attributes seem more directly akin to Tolkien's dwarves than most mythological representations, and D&D elves likewise. And halflings, of course (although Tolkien didn't invent 'hobbit', despite what his estate claims).*

---

Of course I included names of humanoids that had been used in Tolkien's works. That was something done purposefully in order to appeal to the JRRT fan base. however, goblin armies are hardly unique to his work. Those critters are written about a good deal in folklore and fairy tales. I believe that is why the Good Professor switched from goblin to "orc" so as to be more unique.

I'll wager you are sad about being able to find any mention of gnoll or bugbear in his writings, so you can point to them too, eh? Heh-heh-heh. This reminds me of the novice editor for a large NYC publisher who when appearing on a SF panel with me asked why I had "stolen dwarves from Tolkien." I set her straight by informing the not-well-read young lady that I had done my research and stolen them from Norse myth, the same source JRRT used;)

Anyway, it doesn't matter what goblin, hobgoblin, and orc are in JRRT's writing, because they are different and not the same in D&D, are they not?

As for hobbit, I found a single reference to that name, sans any discriptive material. The hobbits of Tolkien's writing are indeed unique to his



authorship. The D&D halflings are not nearly as unique, as they are meant to fill in for those gamers who admire hobbits.

Quote:

---

*Of the D&D Player-Character races, half-orcs are perhaps the least Tolkienesque in that the ones hinted at in LOTR seem to be sly, sneaky infiltrators rather than big dumb lunks, although I think he does have it that the big Uruk Hai/hobgoblins are the result of orc-human crossbreeding.*

---

That being the case, the proper term for such hybrids is half-hobgoblins, I suppose...

What about elves? The D&D elf has little of JRRT's elf in it. they are shorter and not at all special as he had therace.

Anyway, I have cleared up all such confusion in the LA RPG. Kobolds are tough and smart and good-looking in a devilish way. Hobgoblins are small and dangerous, goblins are bigger and more dangerous. Trolls are more like medieval trolls, turn to stone daylight. There are allsorts of elf-like races--alfs, lyfs, elfs, ilfs, and wylfs. Orgre are the baddest of regular giants--those of deital sorts not included, of course.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 09:24 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Gray Mouser**

Gary,

*I have a question that has long puzzled me. It's about PC's acquiring Magic-User spells. IN the DMG (p. 39) it states:*

*"Naturally, magic-user player characters will do their utmost to acquire books of spells and scrolls in order to complete their own spell books. To those acquired, the magic-user will add 1 (and ONLY 1) spell when he or she actually gains an experience level (q.v.). Therefore, most will be frantically attempting to purchase or cozen spells from non-player character magic-users, or even from other player character magic-users."*

*OK, here's my question. When you say: "To those acquired, the magic-user will add 1 (and ONLY 1) spell when he or she actually gains an experience level." do you mean that the PC mage AUTOMATICALLY gains a new spell in their spell book whenever the rise in levels? For example, if my M-U is going from 1st to 2nd level do I get to add a brand new spell to my spell book even if I did NOT find a scroll or spell book in the dungeon I just explored?*

*If this is, in fact, the case then how should you handle it when a M-U goes up levels and gets the ability to cast a spell of a new level AND gains the ability to cast more spells in a level in which he's already proficient? For example, my M-U goes from 6th level to 7th level and is now able to cast 4th level spells AND gains an additional 2nd level spell.*

*Sorry for asking such an involved question, but you have no idea how long I've tried to figure this one out! BUT since I found this site I figured I may as well go straight to the horse's mouth (so to speak).*

*Thanks in advance!*

*Gray Mouser*

---

Howdy!

I left all of your message up here so as to refer to it as I respond.

The M-U going up a level is assumed to do so through training with a mage of higher level, or at worst the study of arcane lore. In this process the character gains knowledge of one new spell of the highest level he is able to cast.

If by advancement the character is also able to cast one or more lower level spells, he will have to make do with those he has in his spell books. He does not gain any new ones in those lower levels, only the capacity to memorize more of them. Thus the M-U character should always be seeking the acquisition of spell books (likely with new and different spells recorded therein) or else scrolls with spells on them that he can record into his library.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Gray Mouser

Friday, 6th February, 2004, 11:49 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

Howdy!

*I left all of your message up here so as to refer to it as I respond.*

*The M-U going up a level is assumed to do so through training with a mage of higher level, or at worst the study of arcane lore. In this process the character gains knowledge of one new spell of the highest level he is able to cast.*

*If by advancement the character is also able to cast one or more lower level spells, he will have to make do with those he has in his spell books. He does not gain any new ones in those lower levels, only the capacity to memorize more of them. Thus the M-U character should always be seeking the acquisition of spell books (likely with new and different spells recorded therein) or else scrolls with spells on them that he can record into his library.*

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Gary,

Thanks so much for answering my question! That's basically what I thought, but I have debated this point with several people over the years and have played it where M-U's must find ALL of their spells and where they get a new spell when they gain the ability to cast higher level spells (the way you've described above). I'm just glad to have gotten a definitive answer.

Thanks again!

Gray Mouser

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 7th February, 2004, 12:29 AM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Gray Mouser***

Gary,

*Thanks so much for answering my question! ...*

*Thanks again!*

*Gray Mouser*

---

Happy to have been of service, Gray mouser:)

While I can't berate DMs who play differently, the DMG does set forth the basic guidelines in regard to acquisition of new spells. In retrospect I should have added the details of how the new spell added when increasing in level was gained, and that would have served well. Hindsight is so accurate...

Cheers,  
Gary

---

dcas

Saturday, 7th February, 2004, 03:17 AM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*As a matter of fact I don't recall reading nything about hobgoblins in *The Hobbit*, or I'd have said so.*

---

The reference is a bit obscure. I don't think there's a reference in the Battle of the Five Armies but at one point Bilbo asks Gandalf why they don't just walk around Mirkwood. Gandalf replies that going to the south will find them in the region of the Necromancer and going north will bring them close to the Grey Mountains, which are "simply stiff with goblins, hobgoblins, and orcs of the worst description." No comment is made as to their size but their placement in between goblins and orcs might lead one to believe that they fall somewhere in the middle.

Quote:

---

*Of course I included names of humanoids that had been used in Tolkien's works. That was something done purpusefully in order to appeal to the JRRT fan base. however, goblin armies are hardly unique to his work. Those critters are written about a good deal in folklore and fairy tales. I believe that is why the Good Professor switched from goblin to "orc" so as to be more unique.*

---

Yes. "Orc" sounds much more serious than "goblin," don't you think? He even created a phony etymology for "orc." ;)

---

Alzrius

Saturday, 7th February, 2004, 03:34 AM

Hi Gary!

An off-the-wall question here. A friend of mine just told me about an episode of *Futurama* where there was a superhero team of five people: Al Gore was the leader, with Nichelle Nichols, Stephen Hawking, you, and computer program Deep Blue, all operating out of a rental van.

My question is, did you do the voice of, well, you, in that episode?

---

Dogbrain

Saturday, 7th February, 2004, 04:45 AM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*simply used "hobgoblin",,,even though its name indicated a smaller sort of goblin. In short, only the name was drawn from folklore, and the rest was made up out of whole cloth;*

---

Uh, uh, obviously, in this case, they were named "hob"goblins because they were tougher and meaner, just like hobnail boots are tougher than

ordinary boots, regardless of what the "hob" in "hobnail" originally meant. (Do I get my No Prize?)

I come from a state where "South Bend" is at the northernmost bend of the Wabash river.

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 7th February, 2004, 02:04 PM

Howdy Dcas:)

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **dcas***

*The reference is a bit obscure. [snip]*

---

And from your reference it seems to be in the Trilogy, not *The Hobbit*. While i do forget a lot of things, having read the latter book first normally, then aloud two or three times for my children, I was rather taken aback that I hadn't recalled any reference to hobgoblins within its pages.

Quote:

---

*Yes. "Orc" sounds much more serious than "goblin," don't you think? He even created a phony etymology for "orc." ;)*

---

Absolutely! The dictionary has an orc defined as a kind of ogre, and ogre is a seriously menacing word. In all events, gamers have taken to "orc" like ducks to water :eek:

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 7th February, 2004, 02:09 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Alzrius***

*Hi Gary!*

*An off-the-wall question here. A friend of mine just told me about an episode of Futurama where there was a superhero team of five people: Al Gore was the leader, with Nichelle Nichols, Stephen Hawking, you, and computer program Deep Blue, all operating out of a rental van.*

*My question is, did you do the voice of, well, you, in that episode?*

---

Hi Alzrius,

Yes indeed, that is my voice and cartoon likeness too in the episode. I had a lot of fun recording my lines...twice The original team leader was David Duchovney, but when he left Fox, they lined up Al Gore. thus my lines were changed, and I got to re-record them. As I've mentioned before, Davic X. Cohen is a former D&D player and DM, a nice chap that I had a good time chatting with.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 7th February, 2004, 02:14 PM

Well, Dogbrain,

As someone who did cobbling work for a time, I can assure you that hobnails means not "tough" but "small". were they regular, the one whose soles they were attached to would be walking on a permanent bed of nails.

In short, "hob" is a prefix indicating small, short, little, much as in "hob"-bit :o

And, being a Midwesterner myself, we all know that South Bend refers to a river, not the State of Indiana.

Heh,  
Gary

---

Gray Mouser

Saturday, 7th February, 2004, 05:07 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*Happy to have been of service, Gray mouser:)*

*While I can't berate DMs who play differently, the DMG does set forth the basic guidelines in regard to acquisition of new spells. In retrospect I should have added the details of how the new spell added when increasing in level was gained, and that would have served well. Hindsight is so accurate...*

*Cheers,*  
*Gary*

---

Hey Gary. No worries about clearing things up in the DMG. I'm sure that it's something that can easily be clarified in the second edition of AD&D....

WHAT? I can dream can't I? (Besides, I'm still waiting for a *worthy* update of my favorite game.)

Heh, heh.

Actually, I'm looking forward to the upcoming "Zagyg's Castle" module. I plan on killing several PC's therein if I get the chance to DM a party or two through it. Just make sure you chain Rob Kuntz to his desk/lap top/whatever. Faster! Faster, I say!

Gray Mouser

---

## Gray Mouser

Saturday, 7th February, 2004, 05:10 PM

Gary,

Speaking of hobbits, hobgoblins, etc. I was wondering how *Orcs* made it into the D&D family of games (and every other fantasy RPG I can think of off hand). After all, the Tolkien estate didn't want you to use the term "hobbit" (although JRRT used "halfpling" as well, although to a lesser extent). Any idea why "orc" made the cut but "hobbit" did not?

Gray Mouser

---

## Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 7th February, 2004, 05:53 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Gray Mouser***

*[snip]*

*Actually, I'm looking forward to the upcoming "Zagyg's Castle" module. I plan on killing several PC's therein if I get the chance to DM a party or two through it. Just make sure you chain Rob Kuntz to his desk/lap top/whatever. Faster! Faster, I say!*

*Gray Mouser*

---

I have about 90% of the large introductory campaign module that acquaints the players with the locale and allows the participants to adventure around the place where the castle ruins and dungeons are located. the GM can place the relatively small area into whatever campaign world is being used, as it's at most about 3,000 square miles. With the walled town, suburban community, various hamlets, and all manner of outdoor places to explore, the opportunities to bite off more than a PC party can chew are manifold. I've loaded a large number of adventure hooks into the work, and when the five dungeon-like areas are finished, the Gm should have sufficient material to keep the players busy for months without resorting to Rob's *Dark Chateau* addition, let alone the perts to come thereafter that detail the ruins above ground, and the many dungeon levels thereunder.

Because I know many GMs will play the initial part a good deal, have PC parties well above "low-level" status, we'll add notes on how to beef up encounters so as to challenge more powerful characters than are usual in upper level dungeon settings;)

Cheers,  
Gary

[Show 20 post\(s\) from this thread on one page](#)

## Col\_Pladoh

Saturday, 7th February, 2004, 06:01 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Gray Mouser***

Gary,

*Speaking of hobbits, hobgoblins, etc. I was wondering how Orcs made it into the D&D family of games (and every other fantasy RPG I can think of off hand). After all, the Tolkien estate didn't want you to use the term "hobbit" (although JRRT used "halfling" as well, although to a lesser extent). Any idea why "orc" made the cut but "hobbit" did not?*

---

*Gray Mouser*

---

Heh, Gray Mouser:)

That's an easy one. Saul Zaents division of Elan Merchandising, representing the Tokien Estate, didn't want TSR to use dwarf, elf, goblin, orc, troll, or wraith, etc. besides objecting to our use of balrog, ent, and hobbit. Because all the rest were in the dictionary (orc as "an ogre"), and the D&D depiction of those creatures was not the same as JRRT's they were happy to settle for TSR dropping balrog, ent, and hobbit.

FWIW, balrog was the only name of the whole bunch unique to Tolkien; "ent" is an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning "giant." JRRT's depiction of them as tree-like was very unique and most compelling IMO.

Cheers,  
Gary

## S'mon

Sunday, 8th February, 2004, 09:07 PM

Quote:

---

*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*What about elves? The D&D elf has little of JRRT's elf in it. they are shorter and not at all special as he had therace.*

*Anyway, I have cleared up all such confusion in the LA RPG. Kobolds are tough and smart and good-looking in a devilish way. Hobgoblins are small and dangerous, goblins are bigger and more dangerous. Trolls are more like medieval trolls, turn to stone daylight. There are allsorts of elf-like races--alfs, lyfs, elfs, ilfs, and wylfs. Orgre are the baddest of regular giants--those of deital sorts not included, of course.*

---

*Cheers,  
Gary*

---

Hi Gary - indeed there are many differences between D&D humanoids and Tolkien's humanoids, and many creatures created from whole cloth as well as some inspired by other sources. I like the wide variety of creatures seen in the Monster Manual & Monster Manual II - it's notable that IMO these actually show more variation than the Fiend Folio, even though that had a multiplicity of different authors there's much more duplication therein.

## Col\_Pladoh

Sunday, 8th February, 2004, 10:13 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **S'mon***

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---

G'day S'mon)

The variety of monster choices, even those in the FF, should be appreciated by all DMs who are populating dungeons and similar settings. For other environments, about 10 normal animals, 20 ordinary monsters and 10 special ones should serve pretty well. Almost all of the additions I made to the base roster used in D&D were for dungeon crawls and special encounters in modules so as to keep the players guessing or to challenge the powerful PCs.

I have to laugh at myself in that regard. About three years back I was playing in an OAD&D game and a wind walker was encountered. Damned if I could remember just how to attack the critter effectively, so my PC ran away, managed to escape while it was busy attacking others.

Cheers,  
Gary

---

mistere29

Monday, 9th February, 2004, 03:14 PM

I would like your thoughts on posion and level drain in OAD&D.

Do you agree when some gamers say they are too deadly. If not, why, and did those dangers see frequent use in you campaign?

Thanks

---

Col\_Pladoh

Monday, 9th February, 2004, 03:32 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **mistere29***

*I would like your thoughts on posion and level drain in OAD&D.*

*Do you agree when some gamers say they are too deadly. If not, why, and did those dangers see frequent use in you campaign?*

*Thanks*

---

No I don't agree with those wimpy whiners who are afraid of a few living dead :p There were always plenty of them in the adventures I ran, and likewise in those that I was playing in. For example, in one Jim Ward scenario, the first monsters we encountered were liches attacking us with rods of cancellation. This was likely in revenge for some of the perils Jim had to face with me as DM, such as when a vampire had his PC trapped. Darned if Jim didn't roll well enough to force the vampire to dust-mote form while I couldn't hit his PC no matter what.

To answer specifically:

First, a cleric or two with a party means the threat is lessened dramatically. Second, m-us have plenty of long-range spells to deal with undead. Third, most other PC types have enough armor to make hitting them pretty difficult. In general the alert and wary party will not be surprised by undead, be able to stay at a distance to make touch by the undead difficult. Wise players know when to have their PCs run away. In extremis, le=ost levels can be restored by use of wishes and clerical spells,

Next those cry babies will be moaning about being turned to stone.

Tell the complainers they should be playing a CRPG where they can save and thus avoid all real danger--ues cheat codes too :D

Cheers,  
Gary

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Gray Mouser

Monday, 9th February, 2004, 03:44 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh***

*No I don't agree with those wimpy whiners who are afraid of a few living dead :p There were always plenty of them in the adventures I ran, and likewise in those that I was playing in. For example, in one Jim Ward scenario, the first monsters we encountered were liches attacking us with rods of cancellation. This was likely in revenge for some of the perils Jim had to face with me as DM, such as when a vampire had his PC trapped. Darned if Jim didn't roll well enough to force the vampire to dust-mote form while I couldn't hit his PC no matter what.*

---

LicheS? RodS of Cancellation? As in plural? Holy cow, Gary, what did you do to warrant such a response?!? Running a single lich intelligently is, imo, more than enough to worry even hardened adventurers. BTW, did your PC's make it out alright?

Gray Mouser

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Col\_Pladoh

Monday, 9th February, 2004, 04:18 PM

Quote:

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*Originally Posted by **Gray Mouser***

*LicheS? RodS of Cancellation? As in plural? Holy cow, Gary, what did you do to warrant such a response?!? Running a single lich intelligently is, imo, more than enough to worry even hardened adventurers. BTW, did your PC's make it out alright?*

*Gray Mouser*

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Hi Gray Mouser:)

Well, I sorta kinda neglected to say that the lot of the PCs involved were pretty well able to manage such an encounter. Mordenkainen, Robilar, and Erac's Cousin, amongst the bunch, IIRR. The liches were destroyed without any loss to the party, and we went on to loot and pillage shamelessly...

Cheers,  
Gary

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Omand

Monday, 9th February, 2004, 05:43 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

Hi Gray Mouser:)

*Well, I sorta kinda neglected to say that the lot of the PCs involved were pretty well able to manage such an encounter. Mordenkainen, Robilar, and Erac's Cousin, amongst the bunch, IIRR. The liches were destroyed without any loss to the party, and we went on to loot and pillage shamelessly...*

Cheers,  
Gary

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Hello Gary,

I have been lurking on these various threads for ages, just wanted to say it great to see you interacting and answering questions.

And, as no one else seems to have done this, I will link this thread to the next thread in the series:

<http://www.enworld.org/forums/showthread.php?t=76849>

Cheers :)

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mistere29

Monday, 9th February, 2004, 09:00 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Col\_Pladoh**

*First, a cleric or two with a party means the threat is lessened dramatically.*

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How often did you adventure with a cleric in the party. I ask because some players seem to think that all adventures are designed so that the cleric's powers are absolutely necessary. Usually there is a npc cleric in every group if players don't like the class.

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Col\_Pladoh

Monday, 9th February, 2004, 10:08 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **mistere29**

*How often did you adventure with a cleric in the party. I ask because some players seem to think that all adventures are designed so that the cleric's powers are absolutely necessary. Usually there is a npc cleric in every group if players don't like the class.*

---

Generally the parties I DMed had one or more clerics, or at least a Paladin PC able to use some cleric spells. My son Ernie's PC, Serten, got to be a fairly high level cleric. When I was playing I usually took along my own cleric, Rigby, sometimes playing him as my main PC and not merely a tag-along henchman. To me playing a cleric is more enjoyable than playing a straight fighter,

Cheers,  
Gary

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solomanii

Thursday, 4th March, 2004, 12:15 PM

I just finished re-reading Descent into the Depths of the Earth. One thing I really like about GG modules is the unbelievable attention to the treasure. Not sure if you customised each one or if it's all random, but I love the little touches. Instead of saying 1 Diamond and 400pp we get 143pp, 29gp and a delicate brooch shaped like a small spider.

Did you do this on purpose or was it random?

I also liked how even some of the random encounters and "grunt" patrols all had unique spells or items and small stories ("the female and male patrols are competitive").

It's this kind of attention to detail you don't see so often in modern modules anymore.

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mistere29

Thursday, 4th March, 2004, 01:14 PM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **solomanii**

*I just finished re-reading Descent into the Depths of the Earth. One thing I really like about GG modules is the unbelievable attention to the treasure. Not sure if you customised each one or if it's all random, but I love the little touches. Instead of saying 1 Diamond and 400pp we get 143pp, 29gp and a delicate brooch shaped like a small spider.*

*Did you do this on purpose or was it random?*

*I also liked how even some of the random encounters and "grunt" patrols all had unique spells or items and small stories ("the female and male patrols are competitive").*

*It's this kind of attention to detail you don't see so often in modern modules anymore.*

dude, the thread is here now

<http://www.enworld.org/forums/showthread.php?t=76849>

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**solomanii**

Thursday, 4th March, 2004, 01:17 PM

Thanks.

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**Eridanis**

Thursday, 4th March, 2004, 01:24 PM

Closed this thread so we don't have any wandering monsters ^H^H^H posters come by! Head on over to Part VII!